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# SPEECH IN REPLY TO HAYNE.

*DELIVERED IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,  
JANUARY 26th, 1830.*

BY DANIEL WEBSTER.

**With Biographical Sketch and Introduction.**



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## LIFE OF DANIEL WEBSTER.

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DANIEL WEBSTER, one of the greatest orators and statesmen that this country ever produced, was born in the town of Salisbury (now known as Franklin), New Hampshire, on the 18th of January, 1782. His father, Ebenezer Webster, was a distinguished soldier and officer in the Revolutionary War. After the war, he moved with his large family into what was then the savage wilds of New Hampshire. He was a man of little book-learning, but with his strong mind and vigorous frame he became a sort of intellectual leader in his neighborhood. He was appointed a "side-judge" for the county, a place of considerable influence in those days. His great aim was to educate his children to the utmost of his limited ability. Captain Webster married Abigail Eastman for a second wife. She was a woman of more than ordinary intellect, and possessed a force of character which was felt throughout the humble circle in which she moved. She was ambitious for her two sons, Ezekiel and Daniel, that they should excel. The distinction attained by both, and especially by Daniel, may well be traced in part to her early promptings and judicious guidance. In the last year of the Revolutionary War, in the humble house which his father had built in the woods on the outskirts of civilization, Daniel Webster was born. During his childhood, he was sickly and delicate, and gave no promise of the robust and vigorous frame which he had in his manhood. It may well be supposed that his early opportunities for education were very scanty. Because he was frail and delicate, Daniel's parents took great pains to send him to the winter schools, oftentimes three miles away from home. As an older half-brother said, "Dan was sent to school that he might get to know as much as the other boys." It is probable that the best part of his early education was derived from the judicious and experienced father, and the resolute, affectionate and ambitious mother. In those days books were very scarce and Daniel eagerly read every book he could find. He was fond of poetry and at the age of twelve could repeat from memory the greater part of Watts' "Psalms and Hymns." In his "Autobiography" he says: "I remember that my father brought home from some of the lower towns Pope's *Essay on Man*, published in a sort of pamphlet. I took it, and very soon could repeat it from beginning to end. We had so few books, that to read them once or twice was nothing. We thought they were all to be got by heart." At the age of fourteen, he was sent to Phillips Academy, in Exeter, N. H., but remained only nine months on account of the poverty of

the family. The future orator found his greatest trouble at Exeter in declaiming. "Many a piece," says Webster "did I commit to memory, and recite and rehearse, in my own room, over and over again; yet when the day came, when the school collected to hear declamations, when my name was called, and I saw all eyes turned to my seat, I could not raise myself from it. When the occasion was over, I went home and wept bitter tears of mortification." He now studied with a clergyman at home and entered Dartmouth College in 1797. The familiar story of how young Webster "worked his way" through college and the self-denial and rigid economy he exercised is told in his "Autobiography." After graduation, hard pushed for money while studying law, how he took charge of an academy at Fryeburg, Maine, for one dollar a day. He paid his board by copying deeds and sent his spare money to help his brother Ezekiel through Dartmouth. Webster was admitted to the bar in 1805, began practice in Bosceawen, and afterwards in Portsmouth. He took a high rank in his profession at once, and, in 1812, was elected a member of Congress. In 1816, he declined a re-election and removed to Boston. In the next seven years he worked long and hard in his profession and soon established his reputation as one of the ablest lawyers of the land. In 1822 he was again sent to Congress and in 1828 he was chosen a Senator. He remained in the Senate for twelve years, when he was appointed Secretary of State by President Harrison. In 1845 he returned to the Senate, and remained until 1850, when he became Secretary of State under President Fillmore. He resigned his office early in 1852 on account of his health and retired to his home by the seaside at Marshfield, Mass., where he died October 24 of the same year.

Daniel Webster is universally acknowledged to be the foremost of constitutional lawyers and of parliamentary debaters, and without a peer in the highest realms of classic and patriotic oratory. Many of his orations, as the famous Bunker Hill Monument orations, the eulogy upon Adams and Jefferson, the speech upon the trial of the murderers of Capt. Joseph White, the "Reply to Hayne," and others are universally accepted as classics in modern oratory. Physically, Webster was a magnificent specimen of a man. Such a form, such a face, such a presence, are rarely given to any man. Webster's manner had a wonderful impressiveness that intimacy never wore off. His gracious bearing and gentle courtesy made him the delight of every person he ever met. His oratory was in perfect keeping with the man, gracious, logical, majestic, and often sublime. He was by nature free, generous and lavish in his manner of living. As a result his own private finances were often much embarrassed. His wealthy admirers often tided him over his financial straits. Hampered as he was financially, he never sullied his great fame or enriched himself or others by political jobbery.

## INTRODUCTION.

To understand fully the character and importance of the Great Debate, as it was called in the newspapers of the day, something should be known of the circumstances that immediately preceded and accompanied it, and of the more distinguished persons who participated in it.

It commenced in the Senate of the United States, in the month of January, 1830, during the first session of the Twenty-first Congress, and in the first year of the administration of Andrew Jackson; and lasted, with occasional but brief interruptions, four months.

Contemporaneous authority gives encouragement to a suspicion that previous to the introduction of Foote's resolutions respecting the public lands, it had been determined by the leaders of the Jackson party to organize a crusade against Mr. Webster. The subsidized presses of the party were most violent in their abuse of his character, his history, and conduct. To revolutionize New England, too, was a purpose they meditated and avowed; and, preparatory to its accomplishment, the overthrow of Mr. Webster seemed necessary.

Whether such conspiracy was ever matured or not, one fact is incontestable—that the nearest and most powerful friends of both the Vice-President and Secretary of State simultaneously attacked Mr. Webster, giving by the act to the world all the ordinary evidence of preconcerted purpose. It was a combination of great power, from the character and position of the parties who composed it. They were all men of ability and reputation.

Benton discharged all sorts of missiles at the head of an adversary, like a catapult. Tropes, metaphors, similes, unsavory allusions, vituperative epithets, damnatory personalities, he hurled upon the victim of his temporary anger. He neither sought nor gave quarter—one of the regular Black Hussars of debate. His manner, if possible, was yet more excited than his language, and his voice more belligerent than either. His whole attitude was defiance, and each gesture a provocation. On this occasion he

headed the assault upon Mr. Webster, or at least upon New England. And it is not improbable that Mr. Webster had him in view when, in his second speech, he spoke of "casting the characters of the drama, assigning to each his part; to one the attack, to another the cry of onset:" a supposition the more likely, as Mr. Benton in his speech justified the suspicion that an onslaught upon New England and New England men had been premeditated before the introduction of this debate.

Hayne dashed into debate, like the Mameluke cavalry upon a charge. There was a gallant air about him, that could not but win admiration. He never provided for retreat; he never imagined it. He had an invincible confidence in himself, which arose partly from constitutional temperament, partly from previous success. His oratory was graceful and persuasive. An impassioned manner, somewhat vehement at times, but rarely if ever extravagant; a voice well modulated and clear; a distinct, though rapid enunciation; a confident, but not often offensive address: these, accompanying and illustrating language well selected and periods well turned, made him a popular and effective speaker.

Colonel Hayne was, incontestably, the most formidable of Mr. Webster's opponents. He had more native and acquired ability than any of them. Such is the concurrent opinion of all who witnessed this great forensic contest; among others, of the Hon. Mr. Everett of Massachusetts.

Such was the formidable character of the combination Mr. Webster found himself compelled by circumstances to meet. Never before, in Parliamentary annals, did one man encounter such fearful odds. The whole moral influence of the administration was directed against Mr. Webster. This, powerful at all times, was doubly so now.

But it is due the memory of the distinguished patriot, soldier, and statesman, Gen. Jackson, to say, that he never entertained towards Mr. Webster any of that vehemence of personal bitterness which he sometimes exhibited towards his opponents. He was of too magnanimous character to hate a magnanimous foe. Mr. Webster never flattered, deceived, or abused him; never opposed his measures, but in an honorable manner, and with respectful language.

On the 29th day of December, 1829, Mr. Foote of Connecticut offered his resolution in the Senate of the United States.



Some skirmishing immediately occurred between Benton, Noble, Woodbury, Holmes, and Foote; but no one imagined it was soon to be followed by a regular engagement. A motion being made and carried to postpone the consideration of the resolution till the next Monday, the excitement for the time subsided. When it next came up for consideration, on Monday, the 18th, Mr. Benton took the floor and made a speech bearing evident indications of study and preparation. In the course of his remarks he made a violent attack upon New England, its men and institutions. He denounced the policy of New England towards the West as illiberal and unjust, but extolled the generosity of the South. "The West must still look," he said, "to the solid phalanx of the South for succor."

He was followed by Colonel Hayne, who, after returning his complimentary salute, "The South would always sympathize with the West," poured also a broadside into New England.

The suddenness of this attack upon New England, its warmth and evident malice, took Mr. Webster by surprise. He was not even aware of Mr. Foote's intention to introduce any such resolution; but yet he could see no harm in its terms or purpose, nor impropriety in its introduction.

As soon as Colonel Hayne concluded his speech, Mr. Webster took the floor in reply. It was late, however, in the day, and he gave way on a motion from Mr. Benton to adjourn. The next day Mr. Webster replied to the speech of Colonel Hayne. The growing interest of the controversy attracted a more than usual crowd to the Senate. It appeared evident to every one a drama of some importance was going on.

On Tuesday, January 21st, the day after Mr. Webster's speech, the Senate resumed again the consideration of Mr. Foote's resolution.

Before the debate recommenced, Mr. Chambers of Maryland rose and expressed a hope that the Senate would consent to postpone further consideration of the resolution till the Monday following, as Mr. Webster, who had taken part in it and wished to be present at its continued discussion, had unavoidable engagements elsewhere.

There was a case of some importance on argument before the Supreme Court in which Mr. Webster was retained as counsel. Compelled to watch its progress, for he knew not at what moment

he might be called upon to address the Bench, he had not been able to command more than an occasional presence in the Senate. He was not present when the resolution was introduced, nor more than a fractional portion of the time while Mr. Benton spoke.

The request was denied him. Colonel Hayne rose in evident agitation, and insisted that the debate should go on without postponement. He said, with some superciliousness of manner and with an angry intonation of voice, that he saw the gentleman from Massachusetts in his seat, and presumed, if he really desired it, he could make an arrangement which would enable him to be present at the discussion that day. He would not consent that the subject should be postponed, until he had had an opportunity of replying to some of the observations which had fallen from the gentleman the day before. Putting his hand to his heart, he said "he had something there which he wished to get rid of. The gentleman had discharged his fire in the face of the Senate, and he demanded an opportunity of returning the shot."

"Then it was," to use the words of a distinguished member of Congress from a Southern State, who was present on the occasion, "that Mr. Webster's person seemed to become taller and bigger. His chest expanded and his eyeballs dilated. Folding his arms in a composed, firm, and most expressive manner, he exclaimed: 'Let the discussion proceed. I am ready. I am ready *now* to receive the gentleman's fire.'"

Mr. Benton, who had gained the floor the day previous on the conclusion of Mr. Webster's remarks, then rose and addressed the Senate for an hour.

The warm blood of Colonel Hayne could not brook the postponement of vengeance. He besought his friend from Missouri to yield the floor while he replied to the Senator from Massachusetts. Mr. Benton gave a cheerful assent.

Colonel Hayne then rose and entered upon his speech. His exordium was respectable in point of ability, and gave assurance of a well-prepared speech. Every one must judge of it for himself. The high estimate that had previously been formed of his talents and character disposed the Senate and audience to listen attentively; and there was much in the earlier part of the speech particularly to confirm the common opinion of his abilities and to command attention.

As he proceeded, his tone and language became more vehement, his allusions more personal. There was an angry inflection in his voice, indicative of loss of temper. His bearing betrayed a good deal of self-confidence, at times almost arrogance. He seemed certain of victory, and only doubtful how much of his strength he should put forth.

Sympathizing and exulting friends surrounded him, from whose countenances he read the apparent success of his philippic. They urged him on with looks and encouraging words. The eye of the Vice-President, which alone of his features ever indicated an emotion, shone approvingly. Nor did he confine his assistance to a glance of approbation. Constantly during the progress of the discussion he sent notes, suggestive, illustrative, and advisory, to the orator, by one of the pages of the Senate.

Colonel Hayne spoke this day, Thursday, January 21st, a little more than an hour. The Senate then adjourned over till Monday following.

The town was full of excitement. The severe nature of Colonel Hayne's attack, the ability with which it was conducted, his great reputation, the eminence of the combatants, and the doubtful issue of the contest afforded ample scope for various discussion. The friends of Colonel Hayne were much elated at what they considered his brilliant *début*, and confidently predicted his ultimate triumph. Mr. Webster's friends doubted and hoped.

It was not alone the combined strength of the administration party in the Senate Mr. Webster had to fear. He could not but be in doubt respecting his political allies. To make the argument which should satisfy all without offending either of these classes seemed a task difficult to be accomplished.

Fortunately for the country and his own fame, his doubts on the subject were removed. His warmest friends urged with great eagerness upon him an unequivocal, unreserved declaration of his views. None were more trusted, nor esteemed by him than Samuel Bell, then a Senator from New Hampshire.

On the morning of the speech, after he had gone to the Capitol, he called Mr. Bell into the robing-room of the Senate, and told him his difficulty. "You know, Mr. Bell," said he, "my constitutional opinions. There are among my friends in the Senate some who may not concur in them. What is expedient to be done?" Mr. Bell, with great emphasis of manner, advised him to speak

out, boldly and fully, his thoughts upon the subject. "It is a critical moment," said he, "and it is time—it is high time the people of this country should know what this Constitution is." "Then," replied Mr. Webster, "by the blessing of Heaven, they shall learn, this day, before the sun goes down, what I understand it to be."

It was on Tuesday, January the 26th, 1830, a day to be hereafter forever memorable in Senatorial annals, that the Senate resumed the consideration of Foote's Resolution. There never was before in the city an occasion of so much excitement. To witness this great intellectual contest multitudes of strangers had for two or three days previous been rushing into the city, and the hotels overflowed. As early as nine o'clock of this morning crowds poured into the Capitol in hot haste; at twelve o'clock—the hour of meeting—the Senate Chamber, its galleries, floor, and even lobbies was filled to its utmost capacity. The very stairways were dark with men, who hung on to one another, like bees in a swarm.

The House of Representatives was early deserted. An adjournment would have hardly made it emptier. The Speaker, it is true, retained his chair, but no business of moment was or could be attended to. Members all rushed in to hear Mr. Webster, and no call of the House or other Parliamentary proceedings could compel them back. The floor of the Senate was so densely crowded, that persons once in could not get out, nor change their position; in the rear of the Vice-Presidential chair the crowd was particularly intense.

Mr. Webster perceived, and felt equal to, the destinies of the moment. The very greatness of the hazard exhilarated him. His spirits rose with the occasion. He awaited the time of onset with a stern and impatient joy.

A confidence in his own resources, springing from no vain estimate of his power, but the legitimate offspring of previous severe mental discipline, sustained and excited him. He had gauged his opponents, his subject, and himself.

He was too, at this period, in the very prime of manhood. He had reached middle age—an era in the life of man when the faculties, physical or intellectual, may be supposed to attain their fullest organization and most perfect development. Whatever

there was in him of intellectual energy and vitality, the occasion, his full life and high ambition, might well bring forth.

He never rose on an ordinary occasion to address an ordinary audience more self-possessed. There was no tremulousness in his voice, or manner: nothing hurried, nothing simulated. The calmness of superior strength was visible everywhere—in countenance, voice, and bearing. A deep-seated conviction of the extraordinary character of the emergency, and of his ability to control it, seemed to possess him wholly. If an observer, more than ordinarily keen-sighted, detected at times something like exultation in his eye, he presumed that it sprang from the excitement of the moment and the anticipation of victory.

The anxiety to hear the speech was so intense, irrepressible and universal, that no sooner had the Vice-President assumed the chair than a motion was made and unanimously carried, to postpone the ordinary preliminaries of Senatorial action, and to take up immediately the consideration of the resolution.

No one who was not present can understand the excitement of the scene; no one, who was, can give an adequate description of it. No word-painting can convey the deep, intense enthusiasm, the reverential attention, of that vast assembly; nor limner transfer to canvas their earnest, eager, awe-struck countenances. Though language were as subtle and flexible as thought, it still would be impossible to represent the full idea of the scene. There is something intangible in an emotion which cannot be transferred. The nicer shades of feeling elude pursuit. Every description, therefore, of the occasion seems to the narrator himself most tame, spiritless, unjust.

Much of the instantaneous effect of the speech arose, of course, from the orator's delivery—the tones of his voice, his countenance and manner.

The variety of incident during the speech, and the rapid fluctuation of passions, kept the audience in continual expectation and ceaseless agitation. There was no chord of the heart the orator did not strike, as with a master-hand. The speech was a complete drama of comic and pathetic scenes, one varied excitement—laughter and tears gaining alternate victory.

A great portion of the speech is strictly argumentative—an exposition of constitutional law. But grave as such portion necessarily is, severely logical, abounding in no fancy or episode.

it engrossed throughout the undivided attention of every intelligent hearer. Abstractions, under the glowing genius of the orator, acquired a beauty, a vitality, a power to thrill the blood and enkindle the affections, awaking into earnest activity many a dormant faculty. His ponderous syllables had an energy, a vehemence of meaning in them, that fascinated while they startled.

The swell and roll of his voice struck upon the ears of the spell-bound audience in deep and melodious cadence, as waves upon the "far-resounding" sea. The Miltonic grandeur of his words was the fit expression of his thought, and raised his hearers up to his theme.

The speech was over, but the tones of the orator still lingered upon the ear, and the audience, unconscious of the close, retained their position. The agitated countenance, the heaving breast, the suffused eye, attested the continued influence of the spell upon them. Hands that in the excitement of the moment had sought each other, still remained closed in an unconscious grasp. Eye still turned to eye, to receive and repay mutual sympathy; and everywhere around seemed forgetfulness of all but the orator's presence and words.

The New England men walked down Pennsylvania Avenue that day, after the speech, with a firmer step and bolder air—"pride in their port, defiance in their eye." You would have sworn they had grown some inches taller in a few hours' time. They devoured the way in their stride. They looked every one in the face they met, fearing no contradiction. They swarmed in the streets, having become miraculously multitudinous. They clustered in parties, and fought the scene over one hundred times that night. Their elation was the greater by reaction. It knew no limits or choice of expression. Not one of them but felt he had gained a personal victory; not one who was not ready to exclaim, with gushing eyes, in the fullness of gratitude, "Thank God I too am a Yankee!"

C. W. MARCH—*Webster and his Contemporaries.*

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The foregoing introduction condensed from Mr. March's book will prove interesting as giving an eye-witness's account of incidents in the great debate.

## REPLY TO HAYNE.

SPEECH IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, ON FOOTE'S RESOLUTION, ON THE 26TH OF JANUARY, 1830.

MR. PRESIDENT :—When the mariner has been tossed for many days in thick weather, and on an unknown sea, he naturally avails himself of the first pause in the storm, the earliest glance of the sun, to take his latitude, and ascertain how far the elements have driven him from his true course. Let us imitate this prudence, and, before we float farther on the waves of this debate, refer to the point from which we departed, that we may at least be able to conjecture where we now are. I ask for the reading of the resolution.

The secretary read the resolution, as follows :

“ *Resolved*, That the committee on public lands be instructed to inquire and report the quantity of public lands remaining unsold within each State and Territory, and whether it be expedient to limit for a certain period the sales of the public lands to such lands only as have heretofore been offered for sale, and are now subject to entry at the minimum price. And, also, whether the office of surveyor-general, and some of the land offices, may not be abolished without detriment to the public interest ; or whether it be expedient to adopt measures to hasten the sales and extend more rapidly the surveys of the public lands.”

We have thus heard, sir, what the resolution is which is actually before us for consideration ; and it will readily occur to every one, that it is almost the only subject about which something has not been said in the speech, running through two days, by which the senate has been now entertained by the gentleman from South Carolina. Every topic in the wide range of our public affairs, whether past or present—everything, general or local, whether belonging to national politics

or party politics—seems to have attracted more or less of the honorable member's attention, save only the resolution before the senate. He has spoken of everything but the public lands; they have escaped his notice. To that subject, in all his excursions, he has not paid even the cold respect of a passing glance.

When this debate, sir, was to be resumed, on Thursday morning, it so happened that it would have been convenient for me to be elsewhere. The honorable member, however, did not incline to put off the discussion to another day. He had a shot, he said, to return, and he wished to discharge it. That shot, sir, which it was kind thus to inform us was coming, that we might stand out of the way, or prepare ourselves to fall before it and die with decency, has now been received. Under all advantages, and with expectation awakened by the tone which preceded it, it has been discharged, and has spent its force. It may become me to say no more of its effect, than that, if nobody is found, after all, either killed or wounded by it, it is not the first time, in the history of human affairs, that the vigor and success of the war have not quite come up to the lofty and sounding phrase of the manifesto.

The gentleman, sir, in declining to postpone the debate, told the senate, with the emphasis of his hand upon his heart, that there was something rankling *here*, which he wished to relieve.

[Mr. Hayne rose and disclaimed having used the word *rankling*.]

It would not, sir, be safe for the honorable member to appeal to those around him, upon the question whether he did in fact make use of that word. But he may have been unconscious of it. At any rate, it is enough that he disclaims it. But still, with or without the use of that particular word, he had yet something *here*, he said, of which he wished to rid himself by an immediate reply. In this respect, sir, I have a great advantage over the honorable gentleman. There is nothing *here*, sir, which gives me the slightest uneasiness; neither fear, nor anger, nor that which is sometimes more troublesome than either, the consciousness of having been in



the wrong. There is nothing, either originating *here*, or now received *here* by the gentleman's shot. Nothing original ; for I had not the slightest feeling of disrespect or unkindness toward the honorable member. Some passages, it is true, had occurred since our acquaintance in this body, which I could have wished might have been otherwise ; but I had used philosophy and forgotten them. When the honorable member rose in his first speech, I paid him the respect of attentive listening ; and when he sat down, though surprised, and I must say even astonished, at some of his opinions, nothing was farther from my intention than to commence any personal warfare. And through the whole of the few remarks I made in answer, I avoided, studiously and carefully, everything which I thought possible to be construed into disrespect. And, sir, while there is thus nothing originating *here* which I wished at any time, or now wish, to discharge, I must repeat also, that nothing has been received *here* which *rankles*, or in any way gives me annoyance. I will not accuse the honorable member of violating the rules of civilized war ; I will not say that he poisoned his arrows. But whether his shafts were, or were not, dipped in that which would have caused rankling if they had reached, there was not as it happened, quite strength enough in the bow to bring them to their mark. If he wishes now to gather up those shafts, he must look for them elsewhere ; they will not be found fixed and quivering in the object at which they were aimed.

The honorable member complained that I had slept on his speech. I must have slept on it, or not slept at all. The moment the honorable member sat down, his friend from Missouri rose, and, with much honeyed commendation of the speech, suggested that the impressions which it had produced were too charming and delightful to be disturbed by other sentiments or other sounds, and proposed that the senate should adjourn. Would it have been quite amiable in me, sir, to interrupt this excellent good feeling ? Must I not have been absolutely malicious, if I could have thrust myself forward, to destroy sensations thus pleasing ? Was it not much better and kinder, both to sleep upon them myself, and to allow others also the

pleasure of sleeping upon them? But if it be meant, by sleeping upon his speech, that I took time to prepare a reply to it, it is quite a mistake. Owing to other engagements, I could not employ even the interval between the adjournment of the senate and its meeting the next morning, in attention to the subject of this debate. Nevertheless, sir, the mere matter of fact is undoubtedly true. I did sleep on the gentleman's speech, and slept soundly. And I slept equally well on his speech of yesterday, to which I am now replying. It is quite possible that in this respect, also, I possess some advantage over the honorable member, attributable, doubtless, to a cooler temperament on my part; for, in truth, I slept upon his speeches remarkably well.

But the gentleman inquires why *he* was made the object of such a reply. Why was he singled out? If an attack has been made on the East, he, he assures us, did not begin it; it was made by the gentleman from Missouri. Sir, I answered the gentleman's speech because I happened to hear it; and because, also, I chose to give an answer to that speech, which, if unanswered, I thought most likely to produce injurious impressions. I did not stop to inquire who was the original drawer of the bill. I found a responsible endorser before me, and it was my purpose to hold him liable, and to bring him to his just responsibility, without delay. But, sir, this interrogatory of the honorable member was only introductory to another. He proceeded to ask me whether I had turned upon him, in this debate, from the consciousness that I should find an overmatch, if I ventured on a contest with his friend from Missouri. If, sir, the honorable member, *ex gratiâ modestiæ*, had chosen thus to defer to his friend, and to pay him a compliment, without intentional disparagement to others, it would have been quite according to the friendly courtesies of debate, and not at all ungrateful to my own feelings. I am not one of those, sir, who esteem any tribute of regard, whether light and occasional, or more serious and deliberate, which may be bestowed on others, as so much unjustly withheld from themselves. But the tone and manner of the gentleman's question forbid me thus to interpret it. I am not at liberty

to consider it as nothing more than a civility to his friend. It had an air of taunt and disparagement, something of the loftiness of asserted superiority, which does not allow me to pass it over without notice. It was put as a question for me to answer, and so put as if it were difficult for me to answer, whether I deemed the member from Missouri an overmatch for myself, in debate here. It seems to me, sir, that this is extraordinary language, and an extraordinary tone, for the discussions of this body.

Matches and overmatches! Those terms are more applicable elsewhere than here, and fitter for other assemblies than this. Sir, the gentleman seems to forget where and what we are. This is a senate, a senate of equals, of men of individual honor and personal character, and of absolute independence. We know no masters, we acknowledge no dictators. This is a hall for mutual consultation and discussion; not an arena for the exhibition of champions. I offer myself, sir, as a match for no man; I throw the challenge of debate at no man's feet. But then, sir, since the honorable member has put the question in a manner that calls for an answer, I will give him an answer; and I tell him, that, holding myself to be the humblest of the members here, I yet know nothing in the arm of his friend from Missouri, either alone or when aided by the arm of *his* friend from South Carolina, that need deter even me from espousing whatever opinions I may choose to espouse, from debating whenever I may choose to debate, or from speaking whatever I may see fit to say, on the floor of the senate. Sir, when uttered as matter of commendation or compliment, I should dissent from nothing which the honorable member might say of his friend. Still less do I put forth any pretensions of my own. But when put to me as a matter of taunt, I throw it back, and say to the gentleman, that he could possibly say nothing less likely than such a comparison to wound my pride of personal character. The anger of its tone rescued the remark from intentional irony, which otherwise, probably, would have been its general acceptance. But, sir, if it be imagined that by this mutual quotation and commendation; if it be supposed that, by casting the characters of the drama, assigning to each his part,

to one the attack, to another the cry of onset; or if it be thought that, by a loud and empty vaunt of anticipated victory, any laurels are to be won here; if it be imagined, especially, that any, or all of these things will shake any purpose of mine, I can tell the honorable member, once for all, that he is greatly mistaken, and that he is dealing with one of whose temper and character he has yet much to learn. Sir, I shall not allow myself, on this occasion, I hope on no occasion, to be betrayed into any loss of temper; but if provoked, as I trust I never shall be, into crimination and recrimination, the honorable member may perhaps find that, in that contest, there will be blows to take as well as blows to give; that others can state comparisons as significant, at least, as his own, and that his impunity may possibly demand of him whatever powers of taunt and sarcasm he may possess. I commend him to a prudent husbandry of his resources.

But, sir, the coalition ! The coalition ! Ay, "the murdered coalition !" The gentleman asks, if I were led or frightened into this debate by the specter of the coalition. "Was it the ghost of the murdered coalition," he exclaims, "which haunted the member from Massachusetts; and which, like the ghost of Banquo, would never down?" "The murdered coalition !" Sir, this charge of a coalition, in reference to the late administration, is not original with the honorable member. It did not spring up in the senate. Whether as a fact, as an argument, or as an embellishment, it is all borrowed. He adopts it, indeed, from a very low origin, and a still lower present condition. It is one of the thousand calumnies with which the press teemed, during an excited political canvass. It was a charge, of which there was not only no proof or probability, but which was in itself wholly impossible to be true. No man of common information ever believed a syllable of it. Yet it was of that class of falsehoods, which, by continued repetition, through all the organs of detraction and abuse, are capable of misleading those who are already far misled, and of further fanning passion already kindling into flame. Doubtless it served in its day, and in greater or less degree, the end designed by it. Having done that, it has sunk into the general mass of stale and loathed

calumnies. It is the very cast-off slough of a polluted and shameless press. Incapable of further mischief, it lies in the sewer, lifeless and despised. It is not now, sir, in the power of the honorable member to give it dignity and decency, by attempting to elevate it, and to introduce it into the senate. He cannot change it from what it is, an object of general disgust and scorn. On the contrary, the contact, if he choose to touch it, is more likely to drag him down, down, to the place where it lies itself.

But, sir, the honorable member was not, for other reasons, entirely happy in his allusion to the story of Banquo's murder and Banquo's ghost. It was not, I think, the friends, but the enemies of the murdered Banquo, at whose bidding his spirit would not *down*. The honorable gentleman is fresh in his reading of the English classics, and can put me right if I am wrong; but, according to my poor recollection, it was at those who had begun with caresses and ended with foul and treacherous murder that the gory locks were shaken. The ghost of Banquo, like that of Hamlet, was an honest ghost. It disturbed no innocent man. It knew where its appearance would strike terror, and who would cry out, A ghost ! It made itself visible in the right quarter, and compelled the guilty and the conscience-smitten, and none others, to start, with,

" Pr'ythee, see there! behold!—look! lo!  
If I stand here, I saw him!"

Their eyeballs were seared (was it not so, sir ?) who had thought to shield themselves by concealing their own hand, and laying the imputation of the crime on a low and hireling agency in wickedness; who had vainly attempted to stifle the workings of their own coward consciences by ejaculating through white lips and chattering teeth, "Thou canst not say I did it!" I have misread the great poet if those who had no way partaken in the deed of the death, either found that they were, or *feared that they should be*, pushed from their stools by the ghost of the slain, or exclaimed to a specter created by their own fears and their own remorse, "Avaunt! and quit our sight!"

There is another particular, sir, in which the honorable mem

ber's quick perception of resemblances might, I should think, have seen something in the story of Banquo, making it not altogether a subject of the most pleasant contemplation. Those who murdered Banquo, what did they win by it? Substantial good? Permanent power? Or disappointment, rather, and sore mortification; dust and ashes, the common fate of vaulting ambition overleaping itself? Did not even-handed justice ere long commend the poisoned chalice to their own lips? Did they not soon find that for another they had "filed their mind?" that their ambition, though apparently for the moment successful, had but put a barren scepter in their grasp? Ay, sir,

" a barren scepter in their gripe  
*Thence to be wrenched by an unlineal hand,  
No son of theirs succeeding."*

Sir, I need pursue the allusion no farther. I leave the honorable gentleman to run it out at his leisure, and to derive from it all the gratification it is calculated to administer. If he finds himself pleased with the associations, and prepared to be quite satisfied, though the parallel should be entirely completed, I had almost said, I am satisfied also; but that I shall think of. Yes, sir, I will think of that.

I spoke, sir, of the ordinance of 1787, which prohibited slavery, in all future times, northwest of the Ohio, as a measure of great wisdom and foresight, and one which had been attended with highly beneficial and permanent consequences. I supposed that, on this point, no two gentlemen in the senate could entertain different opinions. But the simple expression of this sentiment has led the gentleman, not only into a labored defense of slavery, in the abstract, and on principle, but also into a warm accusation against me, as having attacked the system of domestic slavery now existing in the southern states. For all this, there was not the slightest foundation, in anything said or intimated by me. I did not utter a single word which any ingenuity could torture into an attack on the slavery of the south. I said, only, that it was highly wise and useful, in legislating for the northwestern country while it was yet a wilderness, to prohibit the introduction of slaves; and

added, that I presumed there was in the neighboring state of Kentucky, no reflecting and intelligent gentleman who would doubt that, if the same prohibition had been extended, at the same early period, over that commonwealth, her strength and population would, at this day, have been far greater than they are. If these opinions be thought doubtful, they are nevertheless, I trust, neither extraordinary nor disrespectful. They attack nobody and menace nobody. And yet, sir, the gentleman's optics have discovered, even in the mere expression of this sentiment, what he calls the very spirit of the Missouri question. He represents me as making an onset on the whole south, and manifesting a spirit which would interfere with, and disturb their domestic condition !

Sir, this injustice no otherwise surprises me, than as it is committed here, and committed without the slightest pretense of ground for it. I say it only surprises me as being done here ; for I know full well, that it is, and has been the settled policy of some persons in the south, for years, to represent the people of the north as disposed to interfere with them in their own exclusive and peculiar concerns. This is a delicate and sensitive point in southern feeling ; and of late years it has always been touched, and generally with effect, whenever the object has been to unite the whole south against northern men or northern measures. This feeling always carefully kept alive, and maintained at too intense a heat to admit discrimination or reflection, is a lever of great power in our political machine. It moves vast bodies, and gives to them one and the same direction. But it is without any adequate cause, and the suspicion which exists wholly groundless. There is not and never has been, a disposition in the north to interfere with these interests of the south. Such interference has never been supposed to be within the power of government ; nor has it been in any way attempted. The slavery of the south has always been regarded as a matter of domestic policy, left with the states themselves, and with which the federal government had nothing to do. Certainly, sir, I am, and ever have been, of that opinion. The gentleman, indeed, argues that slavery, in the abstract, is no evil. Most assuredly I need not say I dif-

fer with him, altogether and most widely, on that point. I regard domestic slavery as one of the greatest of evils, both moral and political. But though it be a malady, and whether it be curable, and if so, by what means ; or, on the other hand, whether it be the *vulnus immedicabile* of the social system, I leave it to those whose right and duty it is to inquire and to decide. And this I believe, sir, is, and uniformly has been, the sentiment of the north.

But as to the Hartford convention, sir, allow me to say, that the proceedings of that body seem now to be less read and studied in New England than farther south. They appear to be looked to, not in New England, but elsewhere, for the purpose of seeing how far they may serve as a precedent. But they will not answer the purpose, they are quite too tame. The latitude in which they originated was too cold. Other conventions, of more recent existence, have gone a whole bar's length beyond it. The learned doctors of Colleton and Abbeville have pushed their commentaries on the Hartford collect so far, that the original text-writers are thrown entirely into the shade. I have nothing to do, sir, with the Hartford convention. Its journal, which the gentleman has quoted, I never read. So far as the honorable member may discover in its proceedings a spirit in any degree resembling that which was avowed and justified in those other conventions to which I have alluded, or so far as those proceedings can be shown to be disloyal to the constitution, or tending to disunion, so far I shall be as ready as any one to bestow on them reprehension and censure.

Having dwelt long on this convention, and other occurrences of that day, in the hope, probably, (which will not be gratified,) that I should leave the course of this debate to follow him at length in those excursions, the honorable member returned, and attempted another object. He referred to a speech of mine in the other house, the same which I had occasion to allude to myself, the other day ; and has quoted a passage or two from it, with a bold, though uneasy and laboring air of confidence, as if he had detected in me an inconsistency. Judging from the gentleman's manner, a stranger to the course of the debate



and to the point in discussion would have imagined, from so triumphant a tone, that the honorable member was about to overwhelm me with a manifest contradiction. Any one who heard him, and who had not heard, what I had, in fact, previously said, must have thought me routed and discomfited, as the gentleman had promised. Sir, a breath blows all this triumph away. There is not the slightest difference in the sentiments of my remarks on the two occasions. What I said here on Wednesday is in exact accordance with the opinion expressed by me in the other house in 1825. Though the gentleman had the metaphysics of Hudibras, though he were able

"to sever and divide  
A hair 'twixt north and northwest side,"

he yet could not insert his metaphysical scissors between the fair reading of my remarks in 1825, and what I said here last week. There is not only no contradiction, no difference, but, in truth, too exact a similarity, both in thought and language, to be entirely in just taste. I had myself quoted the same speech ; had recurred to it, and spoke with it open before me ; and much of what I said was little more than a repetition from it.

I need not repeat at large the general topics of the honorable gentleman's speech. When he said yesterday that he did not attack the eastern states, he certainly must have forgotten, not only particular remarks, but the whole drift and tenor of his speech; unless he means by not attacking, that he did not commence hostilities, but that another had preceded him in the attack. He, in the first place, disproved of the whole course of the government, for forty years, in regard to its disposition of the public land; and then, turning northward and eastward, and fancying he had found a cause for alleged narrowness and niggardliness in the "accursed policy" of the tariff, to which he represented the people of New England as wedded, he went on for a full hour with remarks, the whole scope of which was to exhibit the results of this policy, in feelings and in measures unfavorable to the west. I thought

his opinions unfounded and erroneous, as to the general course of the government, and ventured to reply to them.

The gentlemen had remarked on the analogy of other cases, and quoted the conduct of European governments toward their own subjects settling on this continent, as in point, to show that we had been harsh and rigid in selling, when we should have given the public lands to settlers without price. I thought the honorable member had suffered his judgment to be betrayed by a false analogy; that he was struck with an appearance of resemblance where there was no real similitude. I think so still. The first settlers of North America were enterprising spirits, engaged in private adventure, or fleeing from tyranny at home. When arrived here, they were forgotten by the mother country, or remembered only to be oppressed. Carried away again by the appearance of analogy, or struck with the eloquence of the passage, the honorable member yesterday observed, that the conduct of government toward the western emigrants, or my representation of it, brought to his mind a celebrated speech in the British parliament. It was, sir, the speech of Colonel Barre. On the question of the stamp act, or tea tax, I forget which, Colonel Barre had heard a member on the treasury bench argue, that the people of the United States, being British colonists, planted by the maternal care, nourished by the indulgence, and protected by the arms of England, would not grudge their mite to relieve the mother country from the heavy burden under which she groaned. The language of Colonel Barre, in reply to this, was: "They planted by your care? Your oppression planted them in America. They fled from your tyranny, and grew by your neglect of them. So soon as you began to care for them, you showed your care by sending persons to spy out their liberties, misrepresent their character, prey upon them, and eat out their substance."

And how does the honorable gentleman mean to maintain, that language like this is applicable to the conduct of the government of the United States toward the western emigrants, or to any representation given by me of that conduct? Were the settlers in the west driven thither by our oppression?

Have they flourished only by our neglect of them? Has the government done dothing but to prey upon them, and eat out their substance? Sir, this fervid eloquence of the British speaker, just when and where it was uttered, and fit to remain an exercise for the schools, is not a little out of place, when it is brought thence to be applied here, to the conduct of our own country toward her own citizens. From America to England, it may be true; from Americans to their own government, it would be strange language. Let us leave it to be recited and declaimed by our boys against a foreign nation; not introduce it here, to recite and declaim ourselves against our own.

We approach, at length, sir, to a more important part of the honorable gentleman's observations. Since it does not accord with my views of justice and policy to give away the public lands altogether, as mere matter of gratuity, I am asked by the honorable gentleman on what ground it is that I consent to vote them away in particular instances. How, he inquires, do I reconcile with these professed sentiments, my support of measures appropriating portions of the lands to particular roads, particular canals, particular rivers, and particular institutions of education in the west? This leads, sir, to the real and wide difference in political opinion between the honorable gentleman and myself. On my part, I look upon all these objects as connected with the common good, fairly embraced in its object and its terms; he, on the contrary, deems them all, if good at all, only local good. This is our difference. The interrogatory which he proceeded to put, at once explains this difference. "What interest," asks he, "has South Carolina in a canal in Ohio?" Sir, this very question is full of significance. It develops the gentleman's whole political system; and its answer expounds mine. Here we differ. I look upon a road over the Alleghanies, a canal round the falls of the Ohio, or a canal or railway from the Atlantic to the western waters, as being an object large and extensive enough to be fairly said to be for the common benefit. The gentleman thinks otherwise, and this is the key to his construction of the powers of the government. He may

well ask what interest has South Carolina in a canal in Ohio. On his system, it is true, she has no interest. On that system, Ohio and Carolina are different governments, and different countries; connected here, it is true, by some slight and ill-defined bond of union, but in all main respects separate and diverse. On that system, Carolina has no more interest in a canal in Ohio than in Mexico. The gentleman, therefore, only follows out his own principles; he does no more than arrive at the natural conclusions of his own doctrines; he only announces the true results of that creed which he has adopted himself, and would persuade others to adopt, when he thus declares that South Carolina has no interest in a public work in Ohio.

Sir, we narrow-minded people of New England do not reason thus. Our *notion* of things is entirely different. We look upon the states, not as separated, but as united. We love to dwell on that union, and on the mutual happiness which it has so much promoted, and the common renown which it has so greatly contributed to acquire. In our contemplation, Carolina and Ohio are parts of the same country; states, united under the same general government, having interests, common, associated, intermingled. In whatever is within the proper sphere of the constitutional power of this government, we look upon the states as one. We do not impose geographical limits to our patriotic feeling or regard; we do not follow rivers and mountains, and lines of latitude, to find boundaries, beyond which public improvements do not benefit us. We who come here, as agents and representatives of these narrow-minded and selfish men of New England, consider ourselves as bound to regard with an equal eye the good of the whole, in whatever is within our power of legislation. Sir, if a railroad or canal, beginning in South Carolina and ending in South Carolina, appeared to me to be of national importance and national magnitude, believing as I do, that the power of government extends to the encouragement of works of that description, if I were to stand up here and ask, What interest has Massachusetts in a railroad in South Carolina? I should not be willing to face my constituents. These

same narrow-minded men would tell me, that they had sent me to act for the whole country, and that one who possessed too little comprehension, either of intellect or feeling, one who was not large enough both in mind and in heart, to embrace the whole, was not fit to be entrusted with the interest of any part.

Sir, I do not desire to enlarge the powers of the government by unjustifiable construction, nor to exercise any not within a fair interpretation. But when it is believed that a power does exist, then it is, in my judgment, to be exercised for the general benefit of the whole. So far as respects the exercise of such a power, the states are one. It was the very object of the constitution to create unity of interests to the extent of the powers of the general government. In war and peace we are one ; in commerce, one ; because the authority of the general government reaches to war and peace, and to the regulation of commerce. I have never seen any more difficulty in erecting lighthouses on the lakes, than on the ocean ; in improving the harbors of inland seas, than if they were within the ebb and flow of the tide ; or in removing obstructions in the vast streams of the west, more than in any work to facilitate commerce on the Atlantic coast. If there be any power for one, there is power also for the other ; and they are all and equally for the common good of the country.

Sir, to these questions retort would be justified ; and it is both cogent and at hand. Nevertheless, I will answer the inquiry, not by retort, but by facts. I will tell the gentleman *when*, and *how*, and *why* New England has supported measures favorable to the west. I have already referred to the early history of the government, to the first acquisition of the lands, to the original laws for disposing of them, and for governing the territories where they lie ; and have shown the influence of New England men and New England principles in all these leading measures. I should not be pardoned were I to go over that ground again. Coming to more recent times, and to measures of a less general character, I have endeavored to prove that everything of this kind, designed for western improvement, has depended on the votes of New England ; all

this is true beyond the power of contradiction. And now, sir, there are two measures to which I will refer, not so ancient as to belong to the early history of the public lands, and not so recent as to be on this side of the period when the gentleman charitably imagines a new direction may have been given to New England feeling and New England votes. These measures, and the New England votes in support of them, may be taken as samples and specimens of all the rest.

In 1820 (observe, Mr. President, in 1820), the people of the west besought congress for a reduction in the price of lands. In favor of that reduction, New England, with a delegation of forty members in the other house, gave thirty-three votes, and one only against it. The four southern states, with over fifty members, gave thirty-two votes for it, and seven against it. Again, in 1821 (observe again, sir, the time), the law passed for the relief of the purchasers of the public lands. This was a measure of vital importance to the west, and more especially to the southwest. It authorized the relinquishment of contracts for lands which had been entered into at high prices, and a reduction in other cases of not less than thirty-seven and a half per cent. on the purchase-money. Many millions of dollars, six or seven, I believe, at least, probably much more, were relinquished by this law. On this bill, New England, with her forty members, gave more affirmative votes than the four southern states, with their fifty-two or three members. These two are far the most important general measures respecting the public lands which have been adopted within the last twenty years. They took place in 1820 and 1821. That is the time *when*.

As to the manner *how*, the gentleman already sees that it was by voting in solid column for the required relief; and, lastly, as to the cause *why*, I tell the gentleman it was because the members from New England thought the measures just and salutary; because they entertained toward the west neither envy, hatred, nor malice; because they deemed it becoming them, as just and enlightened men, to meet the exigency which had arisen in the west with the appropriate measure of relief; because they felt it due to their own characters, and the char-

acters of their New England predecessors in this government, to act toward the new states in the spirit of a liberal, patronizing, magnanimous policy. So much, sir, for the cause *why*, and I hope that by this time, sir, the honorable gentleman is satisfied ; if not, I do not know *when*, or *how*, or *why* he ever will be.

This government, Mr. President, from its origin to the peace of 1815, had been too much engrossed with various other important concerns to be able to turn its thoughts inward, and look to the development of its vast internal resources. In the early part of President Washington's administration, it was fully occupied with completing its own organization, providing for the public debt, defending the frontiers, and maintaining domestic peace. Before the termination of that administration, the fires of the French revolution blazed forth, as from a new-opened volcano, and the whole breadth of the ocean did not secure us from its effects. The smoke and the cinders reached us, though not the burning lava. Difficult and agitating questions, embarrassing to government and dividing public opinion, sprung out of the new state of our foreign relations, and were succeeded by others, and yet again by others, equally embarrassing and equally exciting division and discord, through the long series of twenty years, till they finally issued in the war with England. Down to the close of that war, no distinct, marked, and deliberate attention had been given, or could have been given, to the internal condition of the country, its capacities of improvement, or the constitutional power of the government in regard to objects connected with such improvement.

The peace, Mr. President, brought about an entirely new and a most interesting state of things ; it opened to us other prospects and suggested other duties. We ourselves were changed, and the whole world was changed. The pacification of Europe, after June, 1815, assumed a firm and permanent aspect. The nations evidently manifested that they were disposed for peace. Some agitation of the waves might be expected, even after the storm had subsided, but the tendency was, strongly and rapidly, toward settled repose.

It so happened, sir, that I was at that time a member of congress, and, like others, naturally turned my attention to the contemplation of the newly altered condition of the country and of the world. It appeared plainly enough to me, as well as to wiser and more experienced men, that the policy of the government would naturally take a start in a new direction ; because new directions would necessarily be given to the pursuits and occupations of the people. We had pushed our commerce far and fast, under the advantage of a neutral flag. But there were now no longer flags, either neutral or belligerent. The harvest of neutrality had been great, but we had gathered it all. With the peace of Europe, it was obvious there would spring up in her circle of nations a revived and invigorating spirit of trade, and a new activity in all the business and objects of civilized life. Hereafter, our commercial gains were to be earned only by success in a close and intense competition. Other nations would produce for themselves, and carry for themselves, and manufacture for themselves, to the full extent of their abilities. The crops of our plains would no longer sustain European armies, nor our ships longer supply those whom war had rendered unable to supply themselves. It was obvious that, under these circumstances, the country would begin to survey itself, and to estimate its own capacity of improvement.

And this improvement—how was it to be accomplished, and who was to accomplish it? We were ten or twelve millions of people, spread over almost half a world. We were more than twenty states, some stretching along the same seaboard, some along the same line of inland frontier, and others on opposite banks of the same vast rivers. Two considerations at once presented themselves, in looking at this state of things, with great force. One was, that that great branch of improvement which consisted in furnishing new facilities of intercourse necessarily ran into different states in every leading instance, and would benefit the citizens of all such states. No one state, therefore, in such cases, would assume the whole expense, nor was the coöperation of several states to be expected. Take the instance of the Delaware breakwater. It will cost several mill-



ions of money. Would Pennsylvania alone ever have constructed it? Certainly never, while this Union lasts, because it is not for her sole benefit. Would Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware have united to accomplish it at their joint expense? Certainly not, for the same reason. It could not be done, therefore, but by the general government. The same may be said of the large inland undertakings, except that, in them, government, instead of bearing the whole expense, coöperates with others who bear a part. The other consideration is, that the United States have the means. They enjoy the revenues derived from commerce, and the states have no abundant and easy sources of public income. The custom-houses fill the general treasury, while the states have scanty resources, except by resort to heavy direct taxes.

Under this view of things, I thought it necessary to settle, at least for myself, some definite notions with respect to the powers of the government with regard to internal affairs. It may not savor too much of self-commendation to remark, that, with this object, I considered the constitution, its judicial construction, its contemporaneous exposition, and the whole history of the legislation of congress under it; and I arrived at the conclusion, that government had power to accomplish sundry objects or aid in their accomplishment, which are now commonly spoken of as INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS. That conclusion, sir, may have been right, or it may have been wrong. I am not about to argue the grounds of it at large. I say only, that it was adopted and acted on even so early as in 1816. Yes, Mr. President, I made up my opinion, and determined on my intended course of political conduct, on these subjects, in the fourteenth congress, in 1816. And now, Mr. President, I have further to say, that I made up these opinions, and entered on this course of political conduct, *Teucro duce*.\* Yes, sir, I pursued in all this a South Carolina track on the doctrines of internal improvement. South Carolina, as she was then represented in the other house, set forth in 1816 under a fresh and leading breeze, and I was among the

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\*At the time when this speech was made, Mr. Calhoun was vice-president, and president of the senate.

followers. But if my leader sees new lights and turns a sharp corner, unless I see new lights also, I keep straight on in the same path. I repeat, that leading gentlemen from South Carolina were first and foremost in behalf of the doctrines of internal improvements, when those doctrines came first to be considered and acted upon in congress. The debate on the bank question, on the tariff of 1816, and on the direct tax, will show who was who, and what was what, at that time.

The tariff of 1816 (one of the plain cases of oppression and usurpation, from which, if the government does not recede, individual states may justly secede from the government) is, sir, in truth, a South Carolina tariff, supported by South Carolina votes. But for those votes it could not have passed in the form in which it did pass; whereas, if it had depended on Massachusetts votes, it would have been lost. Does not the honorable gentleman well know all this? There are certainly those who do, full well, know it all. I do not say this to reproach South Carolina. I only state the fact; and I think it will appear to be true, that among the earliest and boldest advocates of the tariff, as a measure of protection, and on the express ground of protection, were leading gentlemen of South Carolina in congress. I did not then, and cannot now, understand their language in any other sense. While this tariff of 1816 was under discussion in the house of representatives, an honorable gentleman from Georgia, now of this house, (Mr. Forsyth), moved to reduce the proposed duty on cotton. He failed, by four votes, South Carolina giving three votes (enough to have turned the scale) against his motion. The act, sir, then passed, and received on its passage the support of a majority of the representatives of South Carolina present and voting. This act is the first in the order of those now denounced as plain usurpations. We see it daily in the list, by the side of those of 1824 and 1828, as a case of manifest oppression, justifying disunion. I put it home to the honorable member from South Carolina, that his own state was not only "art and part" in this measure, but the *causa causans*. Without her aid, this seminal principle of mischief, this root of Upas, could not have been planted. I have already said,

and it is true, that this act proceeded on the ground of protection. It interfered directly with existing interests of great value and amount. It cut up the Calcutta cotton trade by the roots, but it passed, nevertheless, and it passed on the principle of protecting manufactures, on the principle against free trade, on the principle opposed to that *which lets us alone*.

Such, Mr. President, were the opinions of important and leading gentlemen from South Carolina, on the subject of internal improvement, in 1816. I went out of congress the next year, and, returning again in 1823, thought I found South Carolina where I had left her. I really supposed that all things remained as they were, and that the South Carolina doctrine of internal improvements would be defended by the same eloquent voices, and the same strong arms, as formerly. In the lapse of these six years, it is true, political associations had assumed a new aspect and new divisions. A party had arisen in the south hostile to the doctrine of internal improvements, and had vigorously attacked that doctrine. Anti-consolidation was the flag under which this party fought ; and its supporters inveighed against internal improvements, much after the manner in which the honorable gentleman has now inveighed against them, as part and parcel of the system of consolidation. Whether this party arose in South Carolina herself, or in her neighborhood, is more than I know. I think the latter. However that may have been, there were those found in South Carolina ready to make war upon it, and who did make intrepid war upon it. Names being regarded as things in such controversies, they bestowed on the anti-improvement gentlemen the appellation of radicals. Yes, sir, the appellation of radicals, as a term of distinction applicable and applied to those who denied the liberal doctrines of internal improvement, originated, according to the best of my recollection, somewhere between North Carolina and Georgia. Well, sir, these mischievous radicals were to be put down, and the strong arm of South Carolina was stretched out to put them down. About this time, sir, I returned to congress. The battle with the radicals had been fought, and our South

Carolina champions of the doctrines of internal improvement had nobly maintained their ground, and were understood to have achieved a victory. We looked upon them as conquerors. They had driven back the enemy with discomfiture, a thing, by the way, sir, which is not always performed when it is promised.

I go to other remarks of the honorable member; and I have to complain of an entire misapprehension of what I said on the subject of the national debt, though I can hardly perceive how any one could misunderstand me. What I said was, not that I wished to put off the payment of the debt, but, on the contrary, that I had always voted for every measure for its reduction, as uniformly as the gentleman himself. He seems to claim the exclusive merit of a disposition to reduce the public charge. I do not allow it to him. As a debt, I was—I am for paying it, because it is a charge on our finances, and on the industry of the country. But I observed that I thought I perceived a morbid fervor on that subject, an excessive anxiety to pay off the debt, not so much because it is a debt simply, as because, while it lasts, it furnishes one objection to disunion. It is a tie of common interest, while it continues. I did not impute such motives to the honorable member himself, but that there is such a feeling in existence I have not a particle of doubt. The most I said was, that if one effect of the debt was to strengthen our Union, that effect itself was not regretted by me, however much others might regret it. The gentleman has not seen how to reply to this, otherwise than by supposing me to have advanced the doctrine that a national debt is a national blessing. Others, I must hope, will find much less difficulty in understanding me. I distinctly and pointedly cautioned the honorable member not to understand me as expressing an opinion favorable to the continuance of the debt. I repeated this caution, and repeated it more than once; but it was thrown away.

On yet another point, I was still more unaccountably misunderstood. The gentleman had harangued against “consolidation.” I told him, in reply, that there was one kind of consolidation to which I was attached, and that was the consolidation of our Union; that this was precisely that consolidation to

which I feared others were not attached; that such consolidation was the very end of the constitution, the leading object, as they had informed us themselves, which its framers had kept in view. I turned to their communication, and read their very words, "the consolidation of the Union," and expressed my devotion to this sort of consolidation. I said, in terms, that I wished not in the slightest degree to augment the powers of this government; that my object was to preserve, not to enlarge; and that by consolidating the Union I understood no more than the strengthening of the union, and perpetuating it. Having been thus explicit, having thus read from the printed book the precise words which I adopted, as expressing my own sentiments, it passes comprehension how any man could understand me as contending for an extension of the powers of the government, or for consolidation in that odious sense in which it means an accumulation, in the federal government, of the powers properly belonging to the states.

Professing to be provoked by what he chose to consider a charge made by me against South Carolina, the honorable member, Mr. President, has taken up a new crusade against New England. Leaving altogether the subject of the public lands, in which his success, perhaps, had been neither distinguished nor satisfactory, and letting go, also, of the topic of the tariff, he sallied forth in a general assault on the opinions, politics and parties of New England, as they have been exhibited in the last thirty years. This is natural. The "narrow policy" of the public lands had proved a legal settlement in South Carolina, and was not to be removed. The "accursed policy" of the tariff, also, had established the fact of its birth and parentage in the same state. No wonder, therefore, the gentleman wished to carry the war, as he expressed it, into the enemy's country. Prudently willing to quit these subjects, he was, doubtless, desirous of fastening on others that which could not be transferred south of Mason and Dixon's line. The politics of New England became his theme; and it was in this part of his speech, I think, that he menaced me with sore discomfiture. Discomfiture! Why, sir, when he attacks anything which I maintain, and overthrows it, when

he turns the right or left of any position which I take up, when he drives me from any ground I choose to occupy, he may then talk of discomfiture, but not till that distant day. What has he done? Has he maintained his own charges? Has he proved what he alleged? Has he sustained himself in his attack on the government, and on the history of the north, in the matter of the public lands? Has he disproved a fact, refuted a proposition, weakened an argument, maintained by me? Has he come within beat of drum of any position of mine? O, no; but he has "carried the war into the enemy's country!" Carried the war into the enemy's country! Yes, sir, and what sort of a war has he made of it? Why, sir, he has stretched a drag-net over the whole surface of perished pamphlets, indiscreet sermons, frothy paragraphs, and fuming popular addresses; over whatever the pulpit in its moments of alarm, the press in its heats, and parties in their extravagance, have severally thrown off in times of general excitement and violence. He has thus swept together a mass of such things as, but that they are now old and cold, the public health would have required him rather to leave in their state of dispersion. For a good long hour or two, we had the unbroken pleasure of listening to the honorable member, while he recited with his usual grace and spirit, and with evident high gusto, speeches, pamphlets, addresses, and all the *et ceteras* of the political press, such as warm heads produce in warm times; and such as it would be "discomfiture" indeed for any one, whose taste did not delight in that sort of reading, to be obliged to peruse.

Mr. President, I shall not—it will not, I trust, be expected that I should either now or at any time, separate this farrago into parts, and answer and examine its components. I shall hardly bestow upon it all a general remark or two. In the run of forty years, sir, under this constitution, we have experienced sundry successive violent party contests. Party arose, indeed, with the constitution itself, and, in some form or other, has attended it through the greater part of its history. Whether any other constitution than the old articles of confederation was desirable, was itself a question on which part-

ies formed ; if a new constitution were framed, what powers should be given to it was another question ; and when it had been formed, what was, in fact, the just extent of the powers actually conferred was a third. Parties, as we know, existed under the first administration, as distinctly marked as those which have manifested themselves at any subsequent period. The contest immediately preceding the political change in 1801, and that, again, which existed at the commencement of the late war, are other instances of party excitement, of something more than usual strength and intensity. In all these conflicts there was, no doubt, much of violence on both and all sides. It would be impossible, if one had a fancy for such employment, to adjust the relative *quantum* of violence between these contending parties. There was enough in each, as must always be expected in popular governments. With a great deal of proper and decorous discussion, there was mingled a great deal, also, of declamation, virulence, crimination and abuse. In regard to any party, probably, at one of the leading epochs in the history of parties, enough may be found to make out another equally inflamed exhibition, as that with which the honorable member has edified us. For myself, sir, I shall not rake among the rubbish of bygone times, to see what I can find, or whether I cannot find something by which I can fix a blot on the escutcheon of any state, any party, or any part of the country. General Washington's administration was steadily and zealously maintained, as we all know, by New England. It was violently opposed elsewhere. We know in what quarter he had the most earnest, constant, and persevering support, in all his great and leading measures. We know where his private and personal character was held in the highest degree of attachment and veneration ; and we know, too, where his measures were opposed, his services slighted, and his character vilified. We know, or we might know, if we turned to the journals, who expressed respect, gratitude, and regret, when he retired from the chief magistracy, and who refused to express either respect, gratitude or regret. I shall not open those journals. Publications more abusive or scurrilous never saw the light, than were sent forth

against Washington, and all his leading measures, from presses south of New England. But I shall not look them up. I employ no scavengers, no one is in attendance on me, tendering such means of retaliation; and if there were, with an ass's load of them, with a bulk as huge as that which the gentleman himself has produced, I would not touch one of them. I see enough of the violence of our own times, to be no way anxious to rescue from forgetfulness the extravagances of times past.

Besides, what is all this to the present purpose? It has nothing to do with the public lands, in regard to which the attack was begun; and it has nothing to do with those sentiments and opinions which, I have thought, tend to disunion, and all of which the honorable member seems to have adopted himself, and undertaken to defend. New England has, at times—so argues the gentleman—held opinions as dangerous as those which he now holds. Suppose this were so; why should *he* therefore abuse New England? If he finds himself countenanced by acts of hers, how is it that, while he relies on these acts, he covers, or seeks to cover, their authors with reproach? But, sir, if in the course of forty years, there have been undue effervescences of party in New England, has the same thing happened nowhere else? Party animosity and party outrage, not in New England but elsewhere, denounced President Washington, not only as a federalist, but as a tory, a British agent, a man who in his high office sanctioned corruption. But does the honorable member suppose, that if I had a tender here who should put such an effusion of wickedness and folly into my hand, I would stand up and read it against the south? Parties ran into great heats again in 1799 and 1800. What was said, sir, or rather what was not said, in those years, against John Adams, one of the signers of the declaration of independence, and its admitted ablest defender on the floor of congress? If the gentleman wishes to increase his stories of party abuse and frothy violence, if he has a determined proclivity to such pursuits, there are treasures of that sort south of the Potomac, much to his taste, yet untouched. I shall not touch them.



The gentleman, sir, has spoken at large of former parties, now no longer in being, by their received appellations, and has undertaken to instruct us, not only in the knowledge of their principles, but of their respective pedigrees also. He has ascended to their origin, and run out their genealogies. With most exemplary modesty, he speaks of the party to which he professes to have belonged himself, as the true Pure, the only honest, patriotic party, derived by regular descent, from father to son, from the time of the virtuous Romans ! Spreading before us the *family tree* of political parties, he takes especial care to show himself snugly perched on a popular bough ! He is wakeful to the expediency of adopting such rules of descent as shall bring him in, in exclusion of others, as an heir to the inheritance of all public virtue and all true political principle. His party and his opinions are sure to be orthodox ; heterodoxy is confined to his opponents. He spoke, sir, of the federalists, and I thought I saw some eyes begin to open and stare a little, when he ventured on that ground. I expected he would draw his sketches rather lightly, when he looked on the circle round him, and especially if he should cast his thoughts to the high places out of the senate. Nevertheless, he went back to Rome, *ad annum urbe condita*, and found the fathers of the federalists in the primeval aristocrats of that renowned empire. He traced the flow of federal blood down through successive ages and centuries, till he brought it into the veins of the American tories, of whom, by the way, there were twenty in the Carolinas for one in Massachusetts. From the tories he followed it to the federalists ; and, as the federal party was broken up, and there was no possibility of transmitting it further on this side of the Atlantic, he seems to have discovered that it has gone off collaterally, though against all the canons of descent, into the ultras of France, and finally become extinguished, like exploded gas, among the adherents of Don Miguel ! This, sir, is an abstract of the gentleman's history of federalism. I am not about to controvert it. It is not, at present, worth the pains of refutation ; because, sir, if at this day any one feels the sin of federalism lying heavily on his conscience, he can easily procure remis-

sion. He may even obtain an indulgence, if he be desirous of repeating the same transgression. It is an affair of no difficulty to get into this same right line of patriotic descent. A man nowadays is at liberty to choose his political parentage. He may elect his own father. Federalist, or not, he may if he choose, claim to belong to the favored stock, and his claim will be allowed. He may carry back his pretensions just as far as the honorable gentleman himself ; nay, he may make himself out the honorable gentleman's cousin, and prove, satisfactorily, that he is descended from the same political great-grandfather. All this is allowable. We all know a process, sir, by which the whole Essex junto could, in one hour, be all washed white from their ancient federalism, and come out, every one of them, an original democrat, dyed in the wool ! Some of them have actually undergone the operation, and they say it is quite easy. The only inconvenience it occasions, as they tell us, is a slight tendency of the blood to the face, a soft suffusion, which, however, is very transient, since nothing is said by those whom they join, calculated to deepen the red on the cheek, but a prudent silence observed in regard to all the past.

Mr. President, in carrying his warfare, such as it is, into New England, the honorable gentlemen all along professes to be acting on the defensive. He elects to consider me as having assailed South Carolina, and insists that he comes forth only as her champion, and in her defense. Sir, I do not admit that I made any attack whatever on South Carolina. Nothing like it. The honorable member, in his first speech, expressed opinions, in regard to revenue and some other topics, which I heard both with pain and with surprise. I told the gentleman I was aware that such sentiments were entertained *out* of the government, but had not expected to find them advanced in it ; that I knew there were persons in the south who speak of our Union with indifference or doubt, taking pains to magnify its evils, and to say nothing of its benefits ; that the honorable member himself, I was sure, could never be one of these ; and I regretted the expression of such opinions as he had avowed, because I thought their ob-

vious tendency was to encourage feelings of disrespect to the Union, and to weaken its connection. This, sir, is the sum and substance of all I said on the subject. And this constitutes the attack which called on the chivalry of the gentleman, in his own opinion, to harry us with such a foray among the party pamphlets and party proceedings of Massachusetts ! If he means that I spoke with dissatisfaction or disrespect of the ebullitions of individuals in South Carolina, it is true. But if he means that I had assailed the character of the state, her honor, or patriotism, that I had reflected on her history or her conduct, he has not the slightest ground for any such assumption. I did not even refer, I think, in my observations, to any collection of individuals. I said nothing of the recent conventions. I spoke in the most guarded and careful manner, and only expressed my regret for the publication of opinions, which I presumed the honorable member disapproved as much as myself. In this, it seems, I was mistaken. I do not remember that the gentleman had disclaimed any sentiment, or any opinion, of a supposed anti-union tendency, which on all or any of the recent occasions has been expressed. The whole drift of his speech has been rather to prove, that, in divers times and manners, sentiments equally liable to my objection have been promulgated in New England.

Then, sir, the gentleman has no fault to find with these recently promulgated South Carolina opinions. And certainly he need have none; for his own sentiments, as now advanced, and advanced on reflection, as far as I have been able to comprehend them, go the full length of all these opinions. I propose, sir, to say something on these, and to consider how far they are just and constitutional. Before doing that, however, let me observe that the eulogium pronounced on the character of the state of South Carolina, by the honorable gentleman, for her revolutionary and other merits, meets my hearty concurrence. I shall not acknowledge that the honorable member goes before me in regard for whatever of distinguished talent, or distinguished character, South Carolina has produced. I claim part of the honor, I partake in the pride, of her great names. I claim them for countrymen, one and all, the Lau-

rences, the Rutledges, the Pinckneys, the Sumpters, the Marions, Americans all, whose fame is no more to be hemmed in by state lines, than their talents and patriotism were capable of being circumscribed within the same narrow limits. In their day and generation, they served and honored the country, and the whole country; and their renown is of the treasures of the whole country. Him whose honored name the gentleman himself bears—does he esteem me less capable of gratitude for his patriotism, or sympathy for his sufferings, than if his eyes had first opened upon the light of Massachusetts, instead of South Carolina? Sir, does he suppose it in his power to exhibit a Carolina name so bright, as to produce envy in my bosom? No, sir, increased gratification and delight, rather. I thank God, that, if I am gifted with little of the spirit which is able to raise mortals to the skies, I have yet none, as I trust, of that other spirit, which would drag angels down. When I shall be found, sir, in my place here in the senate, or elsewhere, to sneer at public merit, because it happens to spring up beyond the little limits of my own state or neighborhood; when I refuse, for any such cause, or for any cause, the homage due to American talent, to elevated patriotism, to sincere devotion to liberty and the country; or, if I see an uncommon endowment of Heaven, if I see extraordinary capacity and virtue, in any son of the south, and if, moved by local prejudice or gangrened by state jealousy, I get up here to abate the tithe of a hair from his just character and just fame, may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!

Sir, let me recur to pleasing recollections; let me indulge in refreshing remembrance of the past; let me remind you that, in early times, no states cherished greater harmony, both of principle and feeling, than Massachusetts and South Carolina. Would to God that harmony might again return! Shoulder to shoulder they went through the revolution; hand in hand they stood round the administration of Washington, and felt his own great arm lean on them for support. Unkind feeling, if it exists, alienation, and distrust are the growth, unnatural to such soils, of false principles since sown. They are weeds, the seeds of which that same great arm never scattered.

Mr. President, I shall enter on no encomium upon Massachusetts; she needs none. There she is. Behold her, and judge for yourselves. There is her history; the world knows it by heart. The past, at least, is secure. There is Boston, and Concord, and Lexington, and Bunker Hill; and there they will remain forever. The bones of her sons, falling in the great struggle for independence, now lie mingled with the soil of every state from New England to Georgia; and there they will lie forever. And, sir, where American liberty raised its first voice, and where its youth was nurtured and sustained, there it still lives, in the strength of its manhood and full of its original spirit. If discord and disunion shall wound it, if party strife and blind ambition shall hawk at and tear it, if folly and madness, if uneasiness under salutary and necessary restraint, shall succeed in separating it from that Union, by which alone its existence is made sure, it will stand, in the end, by the side of that cradle in which its infancy was rocked; it will stretch forth its arm with whatever of vigor it may still retain over the friends who gather round it; and it will fall at last, if fall it must, amidst the proudest monuments of its own glory, and on the very spot of its origin.

There yet remains to be performed, Mr. President, by far the most grave and important duty, which I feel to be devolved on me by this occasion. It is to state, and to defend, what I conceive to be the true principles of the constitution under which we are here assembled. I might well have desired that so weighty a task should have fallen into other and abler hands. I could have wished that it should have been executed by those whose character and experience give weight and influence to their opinions, such as cannot possibly belong to mine. But, sir, I have met the occasion, not sought it; and I shall proceed to state my own sentiments, without challenging for them any particular regard, with studied plainness, and as much precision as possible.

I understand the honorable gentleman from South Carolina to maintain, that it is a right of the state legislatures to interfere, whenever, in their judgment, this government transcends its constitutional limits, and to arrest the operation of its laws.

I understand him to maintain this right, as a right existing *under* the constitution, not as a right to overthrow it on the ground of extreme necessity, such as would justify violent revolution.

I understand him to maintain an authority, on the part of the states, thus to interfere, for the purpose of correcting the exercise of power by the general government, of checking it, and of compelling it to conform to their opinion of the extent of its powers.

I understand him to maintain, that the ultimate power of judging of the constitutional extent of its own authority is not lodged exclusively in the general government, or any branch of it; but that, on the contrary, the states may lawfully decide for themselves, and each state for itself, whether, in a given case, the act of the general government transcends its power.

I understand him to insist, that, if the exigency of the case, in the opinion of any state government, require it, such state-government may, by its own sovereign authority, annul an act of the general government which it deems plainly and palpably unconstitutional.

This is the sum of what I understand from him to be the South Carolina doctrine, and the doctrine which he maintains. I propose to consider it, and compare it with the constitution. Allow me to say, as a preliminary remark, that I call this the South Carolina doctrine only because the gentleman himself has so denominated it. I do not feel at liberty to say that South Carolina, as a state, has ever advanced these sentiments. I hope she has not, and never may. That a great majority of her people are opposed to the tariff laws, is doubtless true. That a majority, somewhat less than that just mentioned, conscientiously believe these laws unconstitutional, may probably also be true. But that any majority holds to the right of direct state interference at state discretion, the right of nullifying acts of congress by acts of state legislation, is more than I know, and what I shall be slow to believe.

That there are individuals besides the honorable gentleman who do maintain these opinions, is quite certain. I recollect

the recent expression of a sentiment, which circumstances attending its utterance and publication justify us in supposing was not unpremeditated: "The sovereignty of the state—never to be controlled, construed, or decided on, but by her own feelings of honorable justice."

The inherent right in the people to reform their government I do not deny; and they have another right, and that is, to resist unconstitutional laws, without overturning the government. It is no doctrine of mine that unconstitutional laws bind the people. The great question is, Whose prerogative is it to decide on the constitutionality or unconstitutionality of the laws? On that, the main debate hinges.

This leads us to inquire into the origin of this government and the source of its power. Whose agent is it? Is it the creature of the state legislatures, or the creature of the people? If the government of the United States be the agent of the state governments, then they may control it, provided they can agree in the manner of controlling it; if it be the agent of the people, then the people alone can control it, restrain it, modify, or reform it. It is observable enough, that the doctrine for which the honorable gentleman contends leads him to the necessity of maintaining, not only that this general government is the creature of the states, but that it is the creature of each of the states severally, so that each may assert the power for itself of determining whether it acts within the limits of its authority. It is the servant of four-and-twenty masters, of different wills and different purposes, and yet bound to obey all. This absurdity (for it seems no less) arises from a misconception as to the origin of this government and its true character. It is, sir, the people's constitution, the people's government, made for the people, made by the people, and answerable to the people. The people of the United States have declared that this constitution shall be the supreme law. We must either admit the proposition, or dispute the authority. The states are, unquestionably, sovereign, so far as their sovereignty is not affected by this supreme law. But the state legislatures, as political bodies, however sovereign, are yet not sovereign over the people. So far as the

people have given power to the general government, so far the grant is unquestionably good, and the government holds of the people, and not of the state governments. We are all agents of the same supreme power, the people. The general government and the state governments derive their authority from the same source. Neither can, in relation to the other, be called primary, though one is definite and restricted, and the other general and residuary. The national government possesses those powers which it can be shown the people have conferred on it, and no more. All the rest belongs to the state governments, or to the people themselves. So far as the people have restrained state sovereignty, by the expression of their will, in the constitution of the United States, so far, it must be admitted, state sovereignty is effectually controlled. I do not contend that it is, or ought to be, controlled farther. The sentiment to which I have referred propounds that state sovereignty is only to be controlled by its own "feeling of justice;" that is to say, it is not to be controlled at all, for one who is to follow his own feelings, is under no legal control. Now, however men may think this ought to be, the fact is, that the people of the United States have chosen to impose control on state sovereignties. There are those, doubtless, who wish they had been left without restraint; but the constitution has ordered the matter differently. To make war, for instance, is an exercise of sovereignty; but the constitution declares that no state shall make war. To coin money is another exercise of sovereign power; but no state is at liberty to coin money. Again, the constitution says that no sovereign state shall be so sovereign as to make a treaty. These prohibitions it must be confessed, are a control on the state sovereignty of South Carolina, as well as of the other states, which does not arise "from her own feelings of honorable justice." Such an opinion, therefore, is in defiance of the plainest provisions of the constitution.

Resolutions, sir, have been recently passed by the legislature of South Carolina. I need not refer to them; they go no farther than the honorable gentleman himself has gone, and I hope not so far. I content myself, therefore, with debating the matter with him.



And now, sir, what I have first to say on this subject is, that at no time, and under no circumstances, has New England, or any state in New England, or any respectable body of persons in New England, or any public man of standing in New England, put forth such a doctrine as this Carolina doctrine.

The gentleman has found no case, he can find none, to support his own opinions by New England authority. New England has studied the constitution in other schools, and under other teachers. She looks upon it with other regards, and deems more highly and reverently both of its just authority and its utility and excellence. The history of her legislative proceedings may be traced. The ephemeral effusions of temporary bodies, called together by the excitement of the occasion, may be hunted up; they have been hunted up. The opinions and votes of her public men, in and out of congress, may be explored. It will all be in vain. The Carolina doctrine can derive from her neither countenance nor support. She rejects it now; she always did reject it; and till she loses her senses, she always will reject it. The honorable member has referred to expressions on the subject of the embargo law, made in this place, by an honorable and venerable gentleman, (Mr. Hillhouse,) now favoring us with his presence. He quotes that distinguished senator as saying, that, in his judgment, the embargo law was unconstitutional, and that, therefore, in his opinion, the people were not bound to obey it. That, sir, is perfectly constitutional language. An unconstitutional law is not binding; *but then it does not rest with a resolution or a law of a state legislature to decide whether an act of congress be or be not constitutional.* An unconstitutional act of congress would not bind the people of this district, although they have no legislature to interfere in their behalf; and, on the other hand, a constitutional law of congress does bind the citizens of every state, although all their legislatures should undertake to annul it by act or resolution. The venerable Connecticut senator is a constitutional lawyer, of sound principles and enlarged knowledge: a statesman practised and experienced, bred in the company of Washington, and holding

just views upon the nature of our governments. He believed the embargo unconstitutional, and so did others; but what then? Who did he suppose was to decide that question? The state legislatures? Certainly not. No such sentiment ever escaped his lips.

Let us follow up, sir, this New England opposition to the embargo laws; let us trace it, till we discern the principle which controlled and governed New England throughout the whole course of that opposition. We shall then see what similarity there is between the New England school of constitutional opinions, and this modern Carolina school. The gentleman, I think, read a petition from some single individual addressed to the legislature of Massachusetts, asserting the Carolina doctrine; that is, the right of state interference to arrest the laws of the Union. The fate of that petition shows the sentiment of the legislature. It met no favor. The opinions of Massachusetts were otherwise. They had been expressed in 1798, in answer to the resolutions of Virginia, and she did not depart from them, nor bend them to the times. Misgoverned, wronged, oppressed, as she felt herself to be, she still held fast her integrity to the Union. The gentleman may find in her proceedings much evidence of dissatisfaction with the measures of government, and great and deep dislike to the embargo; all this makes the ease so much the stronger for her; for, notwithstanding all this dissatisfaction and dislike, she claimed no right, still, to sever asunder the bonds of the Union. There was heat, and there was anger in her political feeling. Be it so; her heat or her anger did not, nevertheless, betray her into infidelity to the government. The gentleman labors to prove that she disliked the embargo as much as South Carolina dislikes the tariff, and expressed her dislike as strongly. Be it so; but did she propose the Carolina remedy? did she threaten to interfere, by state authority, to annul the laws of the Union? That is the question for the gentleman's consideration.

No doubt, sir, a great majority of the people of New England conscientiously believed the embargo law of 1807 unconstitutional; as conscientiously, certainly, as the people of South

Carolina hold that opinion of the tariff. They reasoned thus: Congress has power to regulate commerce; but here is a law they said, stopping all commerce and stopping it indefinitely. The law is perpetual; that is, it is not limited in point of time, and must of course continue until it shall be repealed by some other law. It is as perpetual, therefore, as the law against treason or murder. Now is this regulating commerce, or destroying it? Is it guiding, controlling, giving the rule to commerce, as a subsisting thing, or is it putting an end to it altogether? Nothing is more certain, than that a majority in New England deemed this law a violation of the constitution. The very case required by the gentleman to justify state interference had then arisen. Massachusetts believed this law to be "a deliberate, palpable, and dangerous exercise of a power not granted by the constitution." Deliberate as it was, for it was long continued; palpable she thought it, as no words in the constitution gave the power, and only a construction, in her opinion most violent, raised it; dangerous it was, since it threatened utter ruin to her most important interests. Here, then, was a Carolina case. How did Massachusetts deal with it? It was, as she thought, a plain, manifest, palpable violation of the constitution, and it brought ruin to her doors. Thousands of families, and hundreds of thousands of individuals, were beggared by it. While she saw and felt all this, she saw and felt also, that, as a measure of national policy, it was perfectly futile; that the country was no way benefited by that which caused so much individual distress; that it was efficient only for the production of evil, and all that evil inflicted on ourselves. In such a case, under such circumstances, how did Massachusetts demean herself? Sir, she remonstrated, she memorialized, she addressed herself to the general government, not exactly "with the concentrated energy of passion," but with her own strong sense, and the energy of sober conviction. But she did not interpose the arm of her own power to arrest the law, and break the embargo. Far from it. Her principles bound her to two things; and she followed her principles, lead where they might. First, to submit to every constitutional law of congress, and secondly,

if the constitutional validity of the law be doubted, to refer that question to the decision of the proper tribunals. The first principle is vain and ineffectual without the second. A majority of us in New England believed the embargo law unconstitutional ; but the great question was, and always will be in such cases, Who is to decide this? Who is to judge between the people and the government? And, sir, it is quite plain, that the constitution of the United States confers on the government itself, to be exercised by its appropriate department, and under its own responsibility to the people, this power of deciding ultimately and conclusively upon the just extent of its own authority. If this had not been done, we should not have advanced a single step beyond the old confederation.

Being fully of opinion that the embargo law was unconstitutional, the people of New England were yet equally clear in the opinion—it was a matter they did not doubt upon—that the question, after all, must be decided by the judicial tribunals of the United States. Before these tribunals, therefore, they brought the question. Under the provisions of the law, they had given bonds to millions in amount, and which were alleged to be forfeited. They suffered the bonds to be sued, and thus raised the question. In the old-fashioned way of settling disputes, they went to law. The case came to hearing, and solemn argument; and he who espoused their cause, and stood up for them against the validity of the embargo act, was none other than that great man, of whom the gentleman has made honorable mention, Samuel Dexter. He was then, sir, in the fullness of his knowledge, and the maturity of his strength. He had retired from long and distinguished public service here, to the renewed pursuit of professional duties, carrying with him all that enlargement and expansion, all the new strength and force, which an acquaintance with the more general subjects discussed in the national councils is capable of adding to professional attainment, in a mind of true greatness and comprehension. He was a lawyer, and he was also a statesman. He had studied the constitution, when he filled public station, that he might defend it. He had exam-

ined the principles that might maintain them. More than all men, or at least as much as any man, he was attached to the general government and to the union of the states. His feelings and opinions all ran in that direction. A question of constitutional law, too, was, of all subjects, that one which was best suited to his talents and learning. Aloof from technicality, and unfettered by artificial rule, such a question gave opportunity for that deep and clear analysis, that mighty grasp of principle, which so much distinguished his higher efforts. His very statement was argument; his inference seemed demonstration. The earnestness of his own conviction wrought conviction in others. One was convinced, and believed, and assented, because it was gratifying, delightful, to think, and feel, and believe, in unison with an intellect of such evident superiority.

Mr. Dexter, sir, such as I have described him, argued the New England cause. He put into his effort his whole heart, as well as all the powers of his understanding; for he had avowed, in the most public manner, his entire concurrence with his neighbors on the point in dispute. He argued the cause; it was lost, and New England submitted. The established tribunals pronounced the law constitutional, and New England acquiesced. Now, sir, is not this the exact opposite of the doctrine of the gentleman from South Carolina? According to him, instead of referring to the judicial tribunals, we should have broken up the embargo by laws of our own; we should have repealed it, *quoad* New England; for we had a strong, palpable, and oppressive case. Sir, we believed the embargo unconstitutional; but still that was matter of opinion, and who was to decide it? We thought it a clear case; but, nevertheless, we did not take the law into our own hands, because we did not wish to bring about a revolution, nor to break up the Union; for I maintain, that between submission to the decision of the constituted tribunals, and revolution, or disunion, there is no middle ground; there is no ambiguous condition, half allegiance and half rebellion. And, sir, how futile, how very futile it is, to admit the right of state interference, and then attempt to save it from the character of un-

lawful resistance, by adding terms of qualification to the causes and occasions, leaving all these qualifications, like the case itself, in the discretion of the state governments. It must be a clear case, it is said, a deliberate case, a palpable case, a dangerous case. But then the state is still left at liberty to decide for herself what is clear, what is deliberate, what is palpable, what is dangerous. Do adjectives and epithets avail anything? Sir, the human mind is so constituted, that the merits of both sides of a controversy appear very clear, and very palpable, to those who respectively espouse them; and both sides usually grow clearer as the controversy advances. South Carolina sees unconstitutionality in the tariff; she sees oppression there, also, and she sees danger. Pennsylvania, with a vision not less sharp, looks at the same tariff, and sees no such thing in it; she sees it all constitutional, all useful, all safe. The faith of South Carolina is strengthened by opposition, and she now not only sees, but *resolves*, that the tariff is palpably unconstitutional, oppressive, and dangerous; but Pennsylvania not to be behind her neighbors, and equally willing to strengthen her own faith by a confident asseveration, *resolves*, also, and gives to every warm affirmative of South Carolina, a plain, downright, Pennsylvania negative. South Carolina to show the strength and unity of her opinion, brings her assembly to a unanimity, within seven voices; Pennsylvania, not to be outdone in this respect any more than in others, reduces her dissentient fraction to a single vote. Now, sir, again, I ask the gentleman, What is to be done? Are these states both right? Is he bound to consider them both right? If not, which is in the wrong? or rather, which has the best right to decide? And if he, and if I, are not to know what the constitution means, and what it is, till these two state legislatures, and the twenty-two others, shall agree in its construction, what have we sworn to, when we have sworn to maintain it! I was forcibly struck, sir, with one reflection, as the gentleman went on in his speech. He quoted Mr. Madison's resolutions, to prove that a state may interfere, in a case of deliberate, palpable, and dangerous exercise of a power not granted. The honorable member supposes the

tariff law to be such an exercise of power ; and that consequently a case has arisen in which the state may, if it see fit, interfere by its own law. Now it so happens, nevertheless, that Mr. Madison deems this same tariff law quite constitutional. Instead of a clear and palpable violation, it is, in his judgment, no violation at all. So that, while they use his authority for a hypothetical case, they reject it in the very case before them. All this, sir, shows the inherent futility, I had almost said a stronger word, of conceding this power of interference to the states, and then attempting to secure it from abuse by imposing qualifications of which the states themselves are to judge. One of two things is true ; either the laws of the Union are beyond the discretion and beyond the control of the states ; or else we have no constitution of general government, and are thrust back again to the days of the confederacy.

Let me here say, sir, that if the gentleman's doctrine had been received and acted upon in New England, in the times of the embargo and non-interc6urse, we should probably not now have been here. The government would very likely have gone to pieces, and crumbled into dust. No stronger case can ever arise than existed under those laws ; no states can ever entertain a clearer conviction than the New England states then entertained ; and if they had been under the influence of that heresy of opinion, as I must call it, which the honorable member espouses, this Union would, in all probability, have been scattered to the four winds. I ask the gentleman, therefore, to apply his principles to that case ; I ask him to come forth and declare, whether, in his opinion, the New England states would have been justified in interfering to break up the embargo system under the conscientious opinions which they held upon it ? Had they a right to annul that law ? Does he admit or deny ? If what is thought palpably unconstitutional in South Carolina justifies that state in arresting the progress of the law, tell me whether that which was thought palpably unconstitutional also in Massachusetts would have justified her in doing the same thing. Sir, I deny the whole doctrine. It has not a foot of ground in the consti-

tution to stand on. No public man of reputation ever advanced it in Massachusetts in the warmest times, or could maintain himself upon it there at any time.

I must now beg to ask, sir, Whence is this supposed right of the states derived? Where do they find the power to interfere with the laws of the Union? Sir, the opinion which the honorable gentleman maintains is a notion founded in a total misapprehension, in my judgment, of the origin of this government, and of the foundation on which it stands. I hold it to be a popular government, erected by the people; those who administer it, responsible to the people; and itself capable of being amended and modified, just as the people may choose it should be. It is as popular, just as truly emanating from the people, as the state governments. It is created for one purpose; the state governments for another. It has its own powers; they have theirs. There is no more authority with them to arrest the operation of a law of congress, than with congress to arrest the operation of their laws. We are here to administer a constitution emanating immediately from the people, and trusted by them to our administration. It is not the creature of the state governments. It is of no moment to the argument, that certain acts of the state legislatures are necessary to fill our seats in this body. That is not one of their original state powers, a part of the sovereignty of the state. It is a duty which the people, by the constitution itself, have imposed on the state legislatures; and which they might have left to be performed elsewhere, if they had seen fit. So they have left the choice of president with electors; but all this does not affect the proposition that this whole government, president, senate, and house of representatives, is a popular government. It leaves it still all its popular character. The governor of the state (in some of the states) is chosen, not directly by the people, but by those who are chosen by the people, for the purpose of performing, among other duties, that of electing a governor. Is the government of the state, on that account, not a popular government? This government, sir, is the independent offspring of the popular will. It is not the creature of state legislatures; nay, more, if the whole truth must be told, the people brought



it into existence, established it, and have hitherto supported it, for the very purpose, amongst others, of imposing certain salutary restraints on state sovereignties. The states cannot now make war; they cannot contract alliances; they cannot make, each for itself, separate regulations of commerce; they cannot lay imposts; they cannot coin money. If this constitution, sir, be the creature of state legislatures, it must be admitted that it has obtained a strange control over the volition of its creators.

The people, then, sir, erected this government. They gave it a constitution, and in that constitution they have enumerated the powers which they bestow on it. They have made it a limited government. They have defined its authority. They have restrained it to the exercise of such powers as are granted; and all others, they declare, are reserved to the states or the people. But, sir, they have not stopped here. If they had, they would have accomplished but half their work. No definition can be so clear, as to avoid possibility of doubt; no limitation so precise, as to exclude all uncertainty. Who, then, shall construe this grant of the people? Who shall interpret their will, where it may be supposed they have left it doubtful? With whom do they repose this ultimate right of deciding on the powers of the government? Sir, they have settled all this in the fullest manner. They have left it with the government itself, in its appropriate branches. Sir, the very chief end, the main design, for which the whole constitution was framed and adopted, was to establish a government that should not be obliged to act through state agency, or depend on state opinion and state discretion. The people had had quite enough of that kind of government under the confederacy. Under that system, the legal action, the application of law to individuals, belonged exclusively to the states. Congress could only recommend; their acts were not of binding force, till the states had adopted and sanctioned them. Are we in that condition still? Are we yet at the mercy of state discretion and state construction? Sir, if we are, then vain will be our attempt to maintain the constitution under which we sit.

But, sir, the people have wisely provided, in the constitution

itself, a proper, suitable mode and tribunal for settling questions of constitutional law. There are in the constitution grants of powers to congress, and restrictions on those powers. There are, also, prohibitions on the states. Some authority must, therefore, necessarily exist, having the ultimate jurisdiction to fix and ascertain the interpretation of these grants, restrictions, and prohibitions. The constitution has itself pointed out, ordained, and established that authority. How has it accomplished this great and essential end? By declaring, sir, that "*the constitution, and the laws of the United States made in pursuance thereof, shall be the supreme law of the land, anything in the constitution or laws of any state to the contrary notwithstanding.*"

This, sir, was the first great step. By this the supremacy of the constitution and laws of the United States is declared. The people so will it. No state law is to be valid which comes in conflict with the constitution, or any law of the United States passed in pursuance of it. But who shall decide this question of interference? To whom lies the last appeal? This, sir, the constitution itself decides also, by declaring "*that the judicial power shall extend to all cases arising under the constitution and laws of the United States.*" These two provisions, sir, cover the whole ground. They are, in truth, the keystone of the arch! With these it is a government; without them it is a confederacy. In pursuance of these clear and express provisions, congress established, at its very first session, in the judicial act, a mode for carrying them into full effect, and for bringing all questions of constitutional power to the final decision of the supreme court. It then, sir, became a government. It then had the means of self-protection; and but for this, it would, in all probability, have been now among the things which are past. Having constituted the government, and declared its powers, the people have further said, that, since somebody must decide on the extent of these powers, the government shall itself decide; subject, always, like other popular governments, to its responsibility to the people. And now, sir, I repeat, how is it that a state legislature acquires any power to interfere? Who, or what, gives them the right to say to the

people, "We, who are your agents and servants, for one purpose, will undertake to decide, that your other agents and servants, appointed by you for another purpose, have transcended the authority you gave them!" The reply would be, I think, not impertinent,— "Who made you a judge over another's servants? To their own masters they stand or fall."

Sir, I deny this power of state legislatures altogether. It cannot stand the test of examination. Gentlemen may say, that, in an extreme case, a state government might protect the people from intolerable oppression. Sir, in such a case, the people might protect themselves, without the aid of the state governments. Such a case warrants revolution. It must make, when it comes, a law for itself. A nullifying act as a state legislature cannot alter the case, nor make resistance any more lawful. In maintaining these sentiments, sir, I am but asserting the rights of the people. I state what they have declared, and insist on their right to declare it. They have chosen to repose this power in the general government, and I think it my duty to support it, like other constitutional powers.

For myself, sir, I do not admit the jurisdiction of South Carolina, or any other state, to prescribe my constitutional duty, or to settle, between me and the people, the validity of laws of congress, for which I have voted. I decline her umpirage. I have not sworn to support the constitution according to her construction of its clauses. I have not stipulated by my oath of office or otherwise, to come under any responsibility, except to the people, and those whom they have appointed to pass upon the question, whether laws, supported by my votes, conform to the constitution of the country. And, sir, if we look to the general nature of the case, could anything have been more preposterous, than to make a government for the whole Union, and yet leave its powers subject, not to one interpretation, but to thirteen or twenty-four interpretations! Instead of one tribunal, established by all, responsible to all, with power to decide for all, shall constitutional questions be left to four-and-twenty popular bodies, each at liberty to decide for itself, and none bound to respect the decisions of others; and each at liberty, too, to give a new construction on every new election of

its own members? Would anything, with such a principle in it, rather with such a destitution of all principle, be fit to be called a government? No, sir. It should not be denominated a constitution. It should be called, rather, a collection of topics for everlasting controversy; heads of debate for a disputatious people. It would not be a government. It would not be adequate to any practical good, or fit for any country to live under.

To avoid all possibility of being misunderstood, allow me to repeat again, in the fullest manner, that I claim no powers for the government by forced or unfair construction. I admit that it is a government of strictly limited powers; of enumerated, specified, and particularized powers; and that whatsoever is not granted, is withheld. But notwithstanding all this, and however the grant of powers may be expressed, its limit and extent may yet, in some cases, admit of doubt; and the general government would be good for nothing, it would be incapable of long existing, if some mode had not been provided in which those doubts, as they should arise, might be peaceably, but authoritatively solved.

And now, Mr. President, let me run the honorable gentleman's doctrine a little into its practical application. Let us look at his probable *modus operandi*. If a thing can be done, an ingenious man can tell *how* it is to be done. Now I wish to be informed *how* this state interference is to be put in practice, without violence, bloodshed, and rebellion. We will take the existing case of the tariff law. South Carolina is said to have made up her opinion upon it. If we do not repeal it, (as we probably shall not,) she will then apply to the case the remedy of her doctrine. She will, we must suppose, pass a law of her legislature, declaring the several acts of congress, usually called the tariff laws, null and void, so far as they respect South Carolina, or the citizens thereof. So far, all is a paper transaction, and easy enough. But the collector at Charleston is collecting the duties imposed by these tariff laws. He, therefore, must be stopped. The collector will seize the goods if the tariff duties are not paid. The state authorities will undertake their rescue; the marshal, with his posse,

will come to the collector's aid, and here the contest begins. The militia of the state will be called out to sustain the nullifying act. They will march, sir, under a very gallant leader ; for I believe the honorable member himself commands the militia of that part of the state. He will raise the NULLIFYING ACT on his standard, and spread it out as his banner ! It will have a preamble, bearing, that the tariff laws are palpable, deliberate, and dangerous violations of the constitution ! He will proceed, with his banner flying, to the custom-house in Charleston,

“ All the while,  
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds.”

Arrived at the custom-house, he will tell the collector that he must collect no more duties under any of the tariff laws. This he will be somewhat puzzled to say, by the way, with a grave countenance, considering what hand South Carolina herself had in that of 1816. But, sir, the collector would not, probably, desist at his bidding. He would show him the law of congress, the treasury instruction, and his own oath of office. He would say, he should perform his duty, come what might.

Here would come a pause ; for they say that a certain stillness precedes the tempest. The trumpeter would hold his breath awhile, and before all this military array should fall on the custom-house, collector, clerks, and all, it is very probable some of those composing it would request of their gallant commander-in-chief to be informed a little upon the point of law ; for they have, doubtless, a just respect for his opinions as a lawyer, as well as for his bravery as a soldier. They know he has read Blackstone and the constitution, as well as Turenne and Vauban. They would ask him, therefore, something concerning their rights in this matter. They would inquire, whether it was not somewhat dangerous to resist a law of the United States. What would be the nature of their offence, they would wish to learn, if they, by military force and array, resisted the execution in Carolina of a law of the United States, and it should turn out, after all, that the law *was constitutional* ! He would answer, of course, treason.

No lawyer could give any other answer. John Fries, he would tell them, had learned that, some years ago. How, then, they would ask, do you propose to defend us? We are not afraid of bullets, but treason has a way of taking people off that we do not much relish. How do you propose to defend us? "Look at my floating banner," he would reply; "see there the *nullifying law*!" Is it your opinion, gallant commander, they would then say, that, if we should be indicted for treason, that same floating banner of yours would make a good plea in bar? "South Carolina is a sovereign state," he would reply. That is true; but would the judge admit our plea! "These tariff laws," he would repeat "are unconstitutional, palpably, deliberately, dangerously." That may all be so; but if the tribunal should not happen to be of that opinion, shall we swing for it? We are ready to die for our country, but it is rather an awkward business, this dying without touching the ground! After all, that is a sort of hemp tax worse than any part of the tariff.

Mr. President, the honorable gentleman would be in a dilemma, like that of another great general. He would have a knot\* before him which he could not untie. He must cut it with his sword. He must say to his followers, "Defend yourselves with your bayonets;" and this is war—civil war.

Direct collision, therefore, between force and force, is the unavoidable result of that remedy for the revision of unconstitutional laws which the gentleman contends for. It must happen in the very first case to which it is applied. Is not this the plain result? To resist by force the execution of a law, generally, is treason. Can the courts of the United States take notice of the indulgence of a state to commit treason? The common saying that a state cannot commit treason herself, is nothing to the purpose. Can she authorize

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\* A knot—the Gordian knot. Gordius, a Phrygian peasant, was chosen king by the Phrygians. He consecrated his wagon to Jupiter, and so skillfully tied the yoke to the pole that the ends of the cord could not be seen. It was current rumor that whoever untied the knot should be King of Asia, and when Alexander the Great was shown it, he cut it with his sword, saying, "It is thus we loose our knots."

others to do it? If John Fries had produced an act of Pennsylvania, annulling the law of congress, would it have helped his case? Talk about it as we will, these doctrines go the length of revolution. They are incompatible with any peaceable administration of the government. They lead directly to disunion and civil commotion; and therefore it is, that at their commencement, when they are first found to be maintained by respectable men, and in a tangible form, I enter my public protest against them all.

The honorable gentleman argues, that if this government be the sole judge of the extent of its own powers, whether that right of judging be in congress or the supreme court, it equally subverts state sovereignty. This the gentleman sees, or thinks he sees, although he cannot perceive how the right of judging, in this matter, if left to the exercise of state legislatures, has any tendency to subvert the government of the Union. The gentleman's opinion may be, that the right *ought not* to have been lodged with the general government; he may like better such a constitution as we should have under the right of state interference; but I ask him to meet me on the plain matter of fact. I ask him to meet me on the constitution itself. I ask him if the power is not found there, clearly and visibly found there?

But, sir, what is this danger, and what are the grounds of it? Let it be remembered that the constitution of the United States is not unalterable. It is to continue in its present form no longer than the people who established it shall choose to continue it. If they shall become convinced that they have made an injudicious or inexpedient partition and distribution of power between the state governments and the general government, they can alter that distribution at will.

If anything be found in the national constitution, either by original provision or subsequent interpretation, which ought not to be in it, the people know how to get rid of it. If any construction be established unacceptable to them, so as to become practically a part of the constitution, they will amend it, at their own sovereign pleasure. But while the people choose to maintain it as it is, while they are satisfied with it,

and refuse to change it, who has given, or who can give, to the state legislatures a right to alter it, either by interference, construction, or otherwise? Gentlemen do not seem to recollect that the people have any power to do anything for themselves. They imagine there is no safety for them, any longer than they are under the close guardianship of the state legislatures. Sir, the people have not trusted their safety, in regard to the general constitution, to these hands. They have required other security, and taken other bonds. They have chosen to trust themselves, first, to the plain words of the instrument, and to such construction as the government itself, in doubtful cases, should put on its own powers, and under their oaths of office, and subject to their responsibility to them; just as the people of a state trust their own state government with a similar power. Secondly, they have reposed their trust in the efficacy of frequent elections, and in their own power to remove their own servants and agents whenever they see cause. Thirdly, they have reposed trust in the judicial power, which, in order that it might be trustworthy, they have made as respectable, as disinterested, and as independent as was practicable. Fourthly, they have seen fit to rely, in case of necessity, or high expediency, on their known and admitted power to alter or amend the constitution, peaceably and quietly, whenever experience shall point out defects or imperfections. And, finally, the people of the United States have at no time, in no way, directly or indirectly, authorized any state legislature to construe or interpret *their* high instrument of government; much less, to interfere, by their own power, to arrest its course and operation.

If, sir, the people in these respects had done otherwise than they have done, their constitution could neither have been preserved, nor would it have been worth preserving. And if its plain provisions shall now be disregarded, and these new doctrines interpolated in it, it will become as feeble and helpless a being as its enemies, whether early or more recent, could possibly desire. It will exist in every state, but as a poor dependent on state permission. It must borrow leave to be; and will be, no longer than state pleasure, or state discre-



tion, sees fit to grant the indulgence, and prolong its poor existence.

But, sir, although there are fears, there are hopes also. The people have preserved this, their own chosen constitution, for forty years, and have seen their happiness, prosperity, and renown grow with its growth, and strengthen with its strength. They are now, generally, strongly attached to it. Overthrown by direct assault, it cannot be ; evaded, undermined, NULLIFIED, it will not be, if we, and those who shall succeed us here, as agents and representatives of the people, shall conscientiously and vigilantly discharge the two great branches of our public trust, faithfully to preserve, and wisely to administer it.

Mr. President, I have thus stated the reasons of my dissent to the doctrines which have been advanced and maintained. I am conscious of having detained you and the senate much too long. I was drawn into the debate with no previous deliberation, such as is suited to the discussion of so grave and important a subject. But it is a subject of which my heart is full, and I have not been willing to suppress the utterance of its spontaneous sentiments. I cannot, even now, persuade myself to relinquish it, without expressing once more my deep conviction, that, since it respects nothing less than the union of the states, it is of most vital and essential importance to the public happiness. I profess, sir, in my career hitherto, to have kept steadily in view the prosperity and honor of the whole country, and the preservation of our federal Union. It is to that Union we owe our safety at home, and our consideration and dignity abroad. It is to that Union that we are chiefly indebted for whatever makes us most proud of our country. That Union we reached only by the discipline of our virtues in the severe school of adversity. It had its origin in the necessities of disordered finance, prostrate commerce, and ruined credit. Under its benign influences, these great interests immediately awoke, as from the dead, and sprang forth with newness of life. Every year of its duration has teemed with fresh proofs of its utility and its blessings ; and although our territory has stretched out wider and wider, and our population spread farther and farther, they have not

outrun its protection or its benefits. It has been to us all a copious fountain of national, social, and personal happiness.

I have not allowed myself, sir, to look beyond the Union, to see what might lie hidden in the dark recess behind. I have not coolly weighed the chances of preserving liberty when the bonds that unite us together shall be broken asunder. I have not accustomed myself to hang over the precipice of disunion, to see whether, with my short sight, I can fathom the depth of the abyss below ; nor could I regard him as a safe counselor in the affairs of this government, whose thoughts should be mainly bent on considering, not how the Union should be best preserved, but how tolerable might be the condition of the people when it shall be broken up and destroyed. While the Union lasts, we have high, exciting, gratifying prospects spread out before us, for us and our children. Beyond that I seek not to penetrate the veil. God grant that in my day, at least, that curtain may not rise ! God grant that on my vision never may be opened what lies behind ! When my eyes shall be turned to behold for the last time the sun in heaven, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonored fragments of a once glorious Union ; on states dissevered, discordant, belligerent ; on a land rent with civil feuds, or drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood ! Let their last feeble and lingering glance rather behold the gorgeous ensign of the republic, now known and honored throughout the earth, still full high advanced, its arms and trophies streaming in their original luster, not a stripe erased or polluted, nor a single star obscured, bearing for its motto, no such miserable interrogatory as "What is all this worth ?" nor those other words of delusion and folly, "Liberty first and Union afterwards ;" but everywhere, spread all over in characters of living light, blazing on all its ample folds, as they float over the sea and over the land, and in every wind under the whole heavens, that other sentiment, dear to every true American heart—*Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable !*

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